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Wilford Belnap



A
HISTORY OF THE PRIESTHOOD

FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD
TO THE PRESENT TIME,

WRITTEN IN DEFENCE OF THE DOCTRINE
AND POSITION OF

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST

OF

LATTER-DAY SAINTS;

AND ALSO A BRIEF TREATISE UPON THE FUNDAMEN-
TAL SENTIMENTS, PARTICULARLY THOSE WHICH
DISTINGUISH THE ABOVE SOCIETY
FROM OTHERS NOW EXTANT.

BY B. WINCHESTER, MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.

"We also as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."—1 PETER ii, 5.

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P R E F A C E .

THE subject of the "Holy Priesthood," is one of magnitude and immense moment to every biblical student, especially those who belong to the society of which the author of the following work is a member, and one that diffuses new light over the whole face of the sacred volume. It enables the inquirer after truth to understand the manner in which God always has, and ever will, deal with the human family.

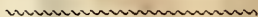
There is no important topic in the oracles of divine truth, that stands independant of this institution. To a certain extent it is the principle by which the Lord works among men, and is the channel through which all the spirltual gifts, such as miracles, revelations, visions, &c., flow or are obtained; and is also, the authority by which individuals are legally inducted into the kingdom of God. This kingdom or church, is organized, and sustained by it: for it is the power of God confered upon His people; but when it ceases to exist on earth, the church falls into darkness, and ultimately degenerates into apostacy; hence, comes division, misrule countless tomes of controversy about doctrine, and all the mysticisms, that now characterizes the religious world.

The subjects of the redemption of man, the mission and divinity of Christ, the precepts of the gospel, the true order of the kingdom of God, the gifts and blessings guaranteed to the citizens of this kingdom, the renewal of the gospel dispensation, the Book of Mormon, the restoration of the house of Israel to the lands of their fathers, Zion for the Millennium, the second advent of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and Millennium, are inseparably connected with the Priesthood, all of which are discoursed upon, and set forth in their true light, in the course of this work.

However the merits or demerits of the work, are not for the author to determine; but for the public, to whom it is now cheerfully submitted for perusal.

The earnest solicitation of numerous friends to publish a work of this description, and an ardent desire to propagate the truth, are the principal causes that induced the author to mature it into its present form; therefore, it is hoped that it will produce the desired effect, which is, to be the means of doing much good; or in other words, to effectually subserve the cause of Christ.

HISTORY OF THE PRIESTHOOD, FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD TO THE PRESENT TIME.



CHAPTER I.

*Condition of Man, and the Earth before the fall—
State of things after the fall—The Lord made
known to Adam the Plan of Salvation—Giving of
the Priesthood to Him, and the History of the
same, in connection with the dealings of God
with Mankind from Adam to Abraham.*

A TRAIN of events having rendered my circumstances such, that I cannot at present be constantly engaged in the field of labour sounding the trumpet of the everlasting gospel, or of descanting upon the beauties of holiness, with the view of elucidating the riches and splendor of the kingdom of God; but being inspired with feelings of respect, and ardent desire for the welfare of my fellow man: and knowing that I cannot employ my time in a more serviceable way, than when I engage myself in making plain to the understanding the matchless work of God, I have retired from the hum of business, and chatting of social society, to while away a few hours of solitude, in deep reflection upon the high-toned economy of God, or self-commending plan of Salvation,

which I deem prudent to publish for the consideration of the honest inquirer after truth.

The subject that occupies its place as one of the departments of the economy of God, that I have made choice of, as will be seen from the "Title," to fit within the narrow limits of this little volume, is the "Holy Priesthood," the history of which I intend to give, with the view of the rise and establishment of the kingdom of God of the latter-days, and fulfilment of the numerous promises of God to his people.

Come Heav'nly Spirit, I invoke thy aid,
 O'respread me with thy cheering influence;
 Touch the intellect, help the mind to soar
 Above the narrow works of boasting men.
 What is in me dark, illumine; O guide
 The immortal part, sacred in the path
 Of truth, that things past, present, and to come,
 May be with great precision unfolded.
 'Midst the labyrinth of the dark ages,
 Of times or trial of struggling mortals,
 Of which no history is conclusive,
 Assist the mind untrammel'd to traverse
 'Midst monuments survived the wreck of time,
 Of truth unchang'd, unsullied, ever bright,
 Though like lonely stars that in chaos shine,
 While darkness, and confusion reigns around.
 High Heav'n lend thine influence, act the part
 'Of the magic star of Bethlehem, that
 Guided the guard'an shepherds of the east,
 To the place where Immanuel was laid:
 'So inspire my mental pow'rs, direct my
 Mind, a' wise and just selection to make,
 Of gems of 'lasting truth; and thus to rear

The temple of argument, in defence
 Of the cause, nay more th' rights of Israel's God.
 Once more kind Heav'n, thine influence I ask,
 That like a well instructed scribe, I may
 In wisdom, bring forth things both old and new ;
 That this work, the force of my exertion,
 May prove a sure guide to eternal bliss.

Considering the foregoing a sufficient introduction, I now invite the reader to divest himself of all unfriendly prejudice, and participate with me in the investigation of our subject ; but before we begin our research, let us have a fair understanding with regard to the meaning of this "holy priesthood," a knowledge of which we are in search of.

When I speak of the holy priesthood, I mean to be understood as speaking of a delegation from God, or a legation from heaven, which is an authority conferred upon individuals authorizing them to act in the name of the Lord, or to administer ordinances and transact such business as appertains to the kingdom of God ; or in other words, the Lord does a part of His work by proxy, or employs righteous men as His agents, and the priesthood is the commission or power given to them ; however, the reader is not to understand from this, that this priesthood is wholly restricted to this world ; but to the contrary, it is a principle congenial with the works of God, and binds the hosts of heaven together, and authorizes the angels to act in the name of God throughout the boundless realms of light ; and (as will be seen hereafter,) no one has a legal right to administer in the name of the Lord without this authority.

The sacred writers have ascribed to this priesthood, two departments, or general heads ; the one they denominated the "*Melchisedec*," the other the "*Aaronic*" or "*Levitical* ;" the latter seems only to have been an appendage to the for-

mer, as I shall endeavor to make appear in its proper place. Having now given my views with regard to the import and object of the priesthood, I renew the invitation to the reader, to join me in this research, which we will now commence.

Moses says: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," (and all things upon it.) "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." Thus we are to infer, that as the earth rolled from the hands of its Maker, every thing was pure. Nothing molested the quiet of all the Lord's holy mountain; all the beasts of the forest were docile or harmless. But the most noble of all His works, was the formation of man in His own image and likeness, whom He located in the beautiful garden of Eden or earthly paradise; and gave him power to have dominion over all things upon the earth. Thus Adam was made governor over all the works of God upon this planet, which then formed a province in the vast kingdom of worlds, or boundless creation of God. In this condition, he not only occupied the place of a ruler, but he formed a connection between the heavenly intelligences, and other animate creatures that dwell upon the earth.

But let us for one moment, further contemplate the state of things at this period:—The earth was (and is yet) the Lord's, and all things upon it: for he created them.—Adam, accompanied by his companion, was located in the capital of it, to all appearance, with a prospect of enjoying a world of pleasure. The earth was the extent of his dominion, yet all were under the jurisdiction of the Lord.

Under these circumstances, Adam having authority to sway his sceptre over the whole province of the earth, it was only necessary that he should be restricted under certain rules or a law, for the well-being of the whole of the lower creation. This being the case, the welfare of all things upon earth, to a certain extent, depended upon the

conduct of man. The relationship that Adam sustained with the Lord, was that of a son, if we credit the testimony of St. Luke.* But alas! man only held this blissful station while in obedience to the Supreme Head of all things; and in disobedience the whole scenery was changed, and tinged with a crimsoned woe, sorrow, and perplexity.—Satan, who in all probability is a fallen angel, employed the serpent or disguised himself, and thus beguiled Eve, who took and gave to Adam, and thus they both partook of the fatal fruit, which was peremptorily forbidden. The penalty of the law was inflicted, which was banishment from the beautiful garden and from the presence of God, also temporal death. Thus satan took the character of an invader, and invaded the earth: the earthly paradise became lost to man, and his relationship with God was broken; hence, since the fall, all mankind, before obedience to the law of redemption, are foreigners, aliens, and strangers to God. Under these circumstances, Adam, before having a knowledge of the plan of salvation, must have been in an awful condition:—A veil of obscurity now intervened between him, and his God; the angels, who were formerly his companions, did not so frequently visit him; the ground was cursed, and became parched and obdurate, so that it required much manual labor to obtain vegetation sufficient for his sustenance. The beasts of the forest began to tear each other in pieces; the more harmless birds of the wood, hastened to some place to screen themselves from the more ravenous kind. Alas! the harmony that once existed, was broken up, and a woeful confusion reigned in its stead, and a horror and awful dread of death pervaded the mind of Adam, and racked his soul with fearful anxiety respecting his future fate. Thus with a prospect of lingering out a wretched existence, in a state of banishment from the presence of God, and with awful feelings, as though they

* See Luke, iv. 33.

were the horrible forebodings of perpetual despair, he no doubt, bewailed his condition.

Now under consideration that these were the circumstances of man at this period, and that satan had invaded the earth; I ask, what was there to be done? Man had lost this earthly paradise or pleasant estate; the infliction of the penalty of the law, which he had broken, rendered him an alien from God—and this curse was to be entailed upon his posterity. Could he without any permission from heaven, establish a law or order of things, by which he could regain that which he had lost? I answer in the negative. Again, would it have been consistant with the character and mercy of the Deity, to have forever abandoned him to wretchedness and woe, without offering him a chance to return? I opine not. Still, I interrogate, would it be consistent with the rules of propriety, for an alien to assume the authority to administer the forms of the law, and thus adopt himself as a citizen of a distant kingdom, or for two foreigners to commission each other to do a thing of the kind? Every intelligent person will respond in the negative. Again I repeat, what should be done? I will answer this by referring to what has been done.

After the Great God, condescended to alleviate the painful condition of man, by promising that in His own due time He would send his Son who should be offered as a sacrifice for the original sin, and redeem all mankind from the consequences of the same. He also proffered to him the law of redemption; or in other words the plan of Salvation, through obedience to which, all the human family can form and sustain an allegiance with God. It would seem from the scriptures, that this law of redemption is the law of the kingdom of God, given to the faithful for their special benefit; but it is absolutely necessary for all to be obedient to it, in order for them to become citizens of this kingdom. But the point

now at issue is, how the human family were to come in possession of this kingdom: they certainly could not usurp it, neither could they form this allegiance with God without a permit from heaven authorizing them so to do.

Again, there was no way for God to establish his kingdom among foreigners, unless he appeared in person and done it, or sent an embassy for that purpose. An assumption on the part of the foreigners, would not answer. Thus it appears, that there was no way for mankind to return and form a relationship with God, only by a permit or grant from Him, accompanied with the specified conditions. I have now traced the subject, to the place where I can with propriety introduce the holy priesthood.

I have already shown, that it was possible for man to receive information concerning the plan of salvation, but at the same time be destitute of the proper authority to reap the benefits of it. Therefore, the thing lacking, which was absolutely necessary, was the permit from heaven; or in other words, the priesthood—which was given to Adam.

This priesthood, as I have before observed, is the principle that binds the hosts of heaven together, is the commission given to angels, and is the necessary authority in the kingdom of God; and indeed, virtually speaking, when this priesthood was given, the kingdom was given: for it is the authority by which all the officers are consecrated, or the kingdom organized, and the ordinances administered. When I speak of the *kingdom of God on earth*, I mean to be understood as speaking of it, as being synonymous with the *church militant*.

Now the reader is to understand, that this kingdom was organized on earth expressly for the benefit of the fallen race of mankind, and all those who are legally adopted into it, and are faithful to God during the short period of their existence in time, will not only be under the immediate pro-

tection of God ; but will heir an inheritance in heaven, and fully regain all that was lost by the fall ; so that our painful course through time, and the serious afflictions that flesh is heir to, in the end will be no detriment to us, but rather, as the apostle says : “ They will turn to our good.” Again, it is incompatible with the Lord’s mode of dealing with the human family, to be present himself and act the part of a priest on earth to administer the ordinances that appertain to His kingdom, or to station His angels here for that purpose ; hence, He elected good men and conferred the priesthood upon them, that they might administer the ordinances and adopt souls into this kingdom. Thus the Lord deputed righteous men to do his work in his name. The following declaration of the apostle, abundantly sustains this idea. “ Now then we are ambassadors for Christ : as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.”*

Moses and the prophet Malachi, connect the priesthood and a covenant together ; speaking of the priesthood conferred upon Aaron and his Sons, they call it a “ covenant of priesthood.”† Paul says, the priesthood after the order of Melchisedec was made or given with an oath. This oath alludes to the covenant made at the time this authority is transferred to the people of God ; therefore, when men transgress and fail on their part to perform what the stipulations of the covenant binds them to, they break it ; and thus, forfeit all the privileges of the priesthood.

Again, the priesthood is evidently what the apostle alludes to, where he says, a “ *dispensation* was given to him to preach the gospel.” A dispensation, and a covenant are inseparably connected, (I mean a general dispensation that is given for the purpose of building up the kingdom.) Therefore, if the

*See 2 Co. v, 20.

†See Nu. xxv, 13, Mal. ii, 4—7.

priesthood was given to Aaron, a covenant was made, and a dispensation given to him.

Now when we consider that God is the same unchangeable being in all ages of the world, and that He has but one mode of saving men, we cannot dispute that His kingdom was established on earth in as early an age of the world, as that in which Adam lived. Yet I admit, there is no positive evidence that Adam had this priesthood; but there is an abundance of circumstantial, as will be seen from the following.

The first evidence, that the priesthood was given to men in this age, I shall examine, is the circumstance of Cain and Abel, offering a sacrifice as a type, no doubt, alluding to, and conveying an idea of the great sacrifice of the Son of God. Moses gives the following account of this offering: "And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had no respect."*

This not only shows, that Adam and his sons had a knowledge of the promised Saviour and of the atonement; but that some one was in possession of the priesthood at this period. But it is very evident, that it was given to Adam, and he conferred it upon his sons; and even if Cain and Abel did not have it, I am certain the person who administered at the altar did; for it is an established principle in the economy of God, that no one has a legal right to administer the ordinances of his kingdom, except he be qualified with the priesthood; not even a sacrifice-offering excepted. To establish this, I refer the reader to the circumstance of Saul, king of Israel, offering a sacrifice at Gilgal, when he

*Ge. iv 3—5.

had no authority to do it.* This was a grievous offence in the sight of God, so much so, that he rent the kingdom from him and his posterity, and gave it to David. The apostle says: "No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron."† Moses strictly forbade any one of the Israelites to administer at the altar, but those who had the priesthood.

The foregoing sufficiently establishes the idea, that the priesthood was given to man almost from the beginning; but it will be remembered, that he retained it only by obedience to the commandments of God: for it is His kingdom, and He will not keep in office those who disobey Him; hence, when Cain and others transgressed, He took it from them. But I will now bring forward another train of evidence; therefore, I solicit the reader to divest himself of all prejudice, and critically examine it with me.

I have before remarked, that the fall of man produced an entire change in his estate, and that all mankind, before obedience to the principles of righteousness, are foreigners from God; and that His kingdom was established on earth, in order that they might return and form an allegiance with Him; hence, as soon as the priesthood was given, and the kingdom established, and men began to increase upon the earth, those who belonged to the kingdom of God, were distinguished from those who rejected it, by the appellation of the "*chosen seed*" or "*Elect people of God.*" And it is possible, that Eve gave birth to children before this priesthood was conferred upon Adam, (although, we have nothing definite to establish such an idea;) but as soon as he received it, he formed this allegiance with God, and become the head officer of the church or kingdom on earth; hence, said he, when Cain was born, "I have gotten a man from the Lord;"‡ thinking, no doubt, that he would succeed his father

*See 1 Sa. xiii.

†Ho. v. 4.

‡Ge. iv, 1.

in the right of presiding over the church: moreover, that he would be numbered with the "chosen seed," because he was born after they had renewed their relationship with God. Cain however, murdered his brother Abel, in consequence of which he was cursed, and excluded from the privileges of the priesthood; therefore, Seth succeeded his father. And it appears, that the principal object Moses had in view, in his very brief history of the world from the creation down to Abraham, was to give the regular lineal descent and succession of priests or patriarchs, who by virtue of the holy priesthood, reigned as kings and priests, or presided in their day over the church.

Again, when we consider the frailty of the human mind, and the character of satan, who invaded the earth, it is no more than reasonable for us to suppose, that at a very early period there became two parties, which indeed was the case. The "chosen seed," who reaped the benefits of the priesthood, and were made the adopted children of God, in contradistinction to the wicked, (who were called the "sons and daughters of men,") were termed the "*Sons and Daughters of God.*" This is certainly, a most excellent explanation of this mysterious passage of scripture: "And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the *sons of God* saw the daughters of men, that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose."* This has been a difficult text for the learned to comment upon. And some have indulged themselves in strange flights of imagination, and enthusiastical speculations about the meaning of it, and have supposed that the angels of heaven, had some mysterious commerce with the fair sex of that age—which is a great absurdity. All of this, is the effect of the ignorance that exists in this our day with regard to the holy priesthood.

*Ge. vi, 1, 2.

Even after the Antideluvian age, the people of the Lord, were called "*Sons of God*;" although, the term ; "*Saints*" was frequently used. The appellation of "*Sons of God*," is often used in the Book of Job ; for instance : "Now there was a day, when the *Sons of God* came to present themselves before the Lord, and satan came also among them."* The idea is, the people of God met together and satan protruded himself into their midst. The apostles also, frequently make use of the term "*Sons of God*."

But before I leave the history of the priesthood in this age, I will again introduce as positive evidence, to sustain the idea of the existence of the priesthood on earth at this period, the following logical conclusions. First, the Lord is the same in all ages of the world, and indeed from and to all eternity. Secondly, his law, or the gospel, is the same invariable rule or plan of salvation ; therefore, it requires in all ages, the same principle of authority to administer it. Thirdly, by the gospel life and immortality were brought to light ; and I am certain, if the bible is true, the Antideluvian patriarchs understood these important principles. Fourthly, the precious blessings, such as communing with God, as Enoch and others did, revelations, administration of angels, faith, &c., &c., are enjoyed by those, who by virtue of the priesthood are adopted into the family of God. Fifthly, there is but one general order of priesthood, and that has existed from all eternity ; for the idea is held forth by the sacred writers, that Christ has been in possession of it from before the foundation of the world, and as the kingdom of God could not have been organized on earth without it ; therefore, as the Lord's people of the age of which I now write, were in possession of the kingdom and of the above mentioned blessings, it is established beyond successful contradiction, that the Lord consecrated men to the office of the priesthood soon after the fall. Being

*Job ii, 6.

assured, in my own mind, that the foregoing is sufficient to establish the position I have taken, I now continue my history.

As I have before mentioned, there was a regular succession of kings, priests or patriarchs, from Adam to Abraham, and it appears that during this age, while the chosen or elect people of God, formed a separate or distinct people by themselves, that it was highly displeasing to God, for them to intermix or marry with the wicked : for it seems, that a violation of this rule, was one reason why the Lord brought the flood upon the world, and destroyed all with the exception of Noah and his family.

It is said that Noah was a preacher of righteousness, not of the ceremonial law of Moses, for it was not then in existence ; but the righteousness which is of faith, or in other words, the gospel of Christ ; and any evidence that the gospel was preached in this early age, is proof that the priesthood existed on earth at the same time.

In the preservation of Noah from destruction by the flood, the regular succession of presiding priests was continued after it. He is a very prominent man, in the history of these early times, and the bible gives him the character of a prophet, and it also records the circumstance of his administering at the altar, which certainly gives him the character of a priest.

There is nothing in the history, of the elapse of time from Noah to Abraham, that particularly attracts attention, only an exhibition of the frailty of man ; for it appears, there was a great falling away, or apostacy from God, and a substitution of an idolatrous, in the place of the true worship. Also, the building of the tower of Babel, which was very offensive to God : for which He confounded the language that the human family then spoke, and scattered them upon all the face of the earth.

I have now concluded the first division of my history ;

therefore, I close this chapter, not however, without first assuring the reader, that the following one contains matter of a very interesting character, and of importance to all mankind.

CHAPTER II.

The object the Lord had in view in raising up the Israelite Nation.—The Gospel was preached in the days of Abraham.—The form of Government that the Lord approbates—And the History of the priesthood from Abraham to Moses.

It appears from what is left on record of the age in which Abraham lived, that the foundation of the heathen mythology was laid, and that a large portion of the world digressed from the path of rectitude and righteousness, and were fast tending forward to that disgraceful confusion and idolatry, that they afterward were thrust into; however, I admit that some few strictly adhered to the principles of righteousness, and that the majority of the nations retained some few vestiges of the pure religion of heaven; as is evident from many things that are recorded in connection with the history of Abraham, and those immediately connected with him. The Lord therefore, foreseeing the result of this apostacy, called Abraham and commanded him to leave the land of his nativity, and go into the land of Canaan.

It seems, that the object the Lord had in view in doing this, was to cause a knowledge of him to be retained on earth, which was likely to be lost among those who had turned to idolatry. In order to accomplish this, the Lord resolved to

raise up from Abraham, a choice nation, and peculiar people;—hence, the Israelites were to be the repositories of his knowledge.

As soon as Abraham reached the land of Canaan, the Lord appeared to him and made known in full his intentions, which were as above, and ceded to him and his posterity after him forever and ever, all the land that he could see from an eminent place on which he stood; He also promised him that his progeny should be, comparatively speaking, as numerous as the stars of heaven, and that in and through his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed. All these considerations were included in the covenant the Lord made with him.

Now the matter seems to stand thus, the Lord in order to accomplish his purposes, resolved to raise up a people and commit to them his oracles or the holy priesthood, and make them the repositories of his knowledge, and stewards over the affairs of his kingdom. This forms a most exquisite solution of the scriptural doctrine of *election and reprobation*. The prophets, Christ, and the apostles, unanimously agree that the Israelite nation, were the chosen or elect people of God; or in other words, they were the chosen seed. The idea is, they were elected to hold the office of the priesthood, that all the world might be blessed through their administration;—for indeed, Christ after the flesh was a descendant of Abraham. In a scriptural sense, the whole Gentile world were reprobated; that is, they were not chosen to hold the office of the priesthood, or to be stewards over the affairs of the kingdom; but this reprobation did not effect their salvation in eternity, provided they were adopted into the family of Abraham or kingdom of God, through obedience to the proper ordinances, administered by those holding the office of the priesthood.

Paul, speaking of this chosen people, says: “Who are

Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises."* The *adoption* alluded to here, is already explained in the preceeding chapter.—All the *covenants* that God ever made with any people respecting priesthood and blessings, are embodied in those made with the house of Israel. The *service* alluded to, appears to be that of the priests, while acting in their official capacity, and not the devotional service required of all mankind: for the former was restricted to the Israelites. Christ said: "Salvation is of the Jews."† All the inspired writers, hold forth the idea, that God elected the Israelite nation to be stewards over the affairs of His house or kingdom, and to hold the office of the priesthood, by virtue of which, all the world could be transplanted into the family of Abraham, and be numbered with the "chosen seed," and sustain an allegiance with God; hence, came the saying; "Salvation is of the Jews." The Lord commanded Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the house of Israel, to circumcise all the males of their families, which was to be as a sign, or token of their relationship with Israel; and that they might be preserved a separate and distinct people by themselves, and not mix with other nations. The covenant made with Abraham concerning the land of Canaan, circumcision, and the multiplication of his posterity, was extra of the covenant of priesthood, which he had received the same as others had before him. The foregoing may be regarded as a slight digression from our subject; but in order to have a correct understanding of the priesthood in this age, it is necessary to have correct information with regard to the object the Lord had in view, in raising up the Israelite nation in the manner in which he did.

The first thing, that I shall now introduce as evidence, to prove that the priesthood was conferred upon men in this age,

*Ro. ix, 4.

†Jno. iv, 22.

is the fact that the gospel was preached in it. Paul says: "And the scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed."* This is conclusive that the gospel was preached to Abraham; but the following is more definite still: "And Melchisedec king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him and said, blessed be Abraham of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth."† The administration of bread and wine as a sacrament, is one of the institutions of the gospel, and was practiced by Christ and his apostles; and no doubt, Melchisedec administered them with the same views, and for the same purpose, that the disciples of Christ did.

The profound reverence that Abimeleck king of Gerar, who took Abraham's wife from him supposing she was his sister, had for the Lord, and the principles of virtue and righteousness, is sufficient evidence that he was acquainted with the religion of heaven, and proves to a demonstration, that the law of righteousness; or in other words, the gospel, was understood in his day. Paul expressly says, the gospel was preached to the children of Israel in the wilderness. Eusebius Pamphilus, bishop of Cesaræ in Palestine, one of the noted fathers of the church, who flourished in the fourth century, has written in his "Ecclesiastical History," a whole chapter to prove that the gospel of Christ was no new thing; but was preached, not only in the days of Abraham, but long before his day. This is of undoubted authority; for Eusebius had a good opportunity to become acquainted with the history of this circumstance.‡ The foregoing abundantly sustains the idea, that the gospel was preached, understood,

*Ga. iii, 8.

†Ge. xiv, 18.

‡See Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History, Book 1, chap. iv.

and even obeyed, in the age in which Abraham lived; but we will now turn our attention, more particularly, to the priesthood, abstract from other principles.

I have before mentioned that Abraham, had the priesthood; and in all probability, he was ordained by Melchisedec: for it is said, that when he returned from the slaughter of the kings, Melchisedec met, and blessed him.—I suppose Abraham was ordained during this interview.

This Melchisedec, who was priest of the most high God and king of Salem, was an extraordinary man in his day; a man of great faith and piety; although, there are some things connected with his history, that are very singular. He no doubt enjoyed all the privileges of the priesthood, and by virtue of the same, reigned as patriarch or king over Salem; and so great was his faith, and fame, that after his day, the priesthood was called after his name. Mr. Joseph Smith explains this as follows: “Why this is called the Melchisedec priesthood, (or priesthood after the order of Melchisedec,) is because Melchisedec was such a great high-priest; before his day it was called the holy priesthood after the order of the Son of God; but out of respect to the name of the Supreme Being, to avoid the too frequent repetition of his name, they the church, called the priesthood after ‘Melchisedec,’ or the ‘Melchisedec priesthood.’” There is an apparent contradiction, in the account given by the apostle Paul of this great man: I mean the following: “For Melchisedec king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; to whom also Abraham gave a tenth of all; first, being by interpretation king of righteousness, (*or a righteous king,*) and after that also king of Salem, which is king of peace; without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life; but

made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.”* Some have considered the saying, “without father, mother, or descent,” sufficient ground for a great many enthusiastic speculations: for instance, that Melchisedec is Christ, or Jehovah; also that he was not a man. But the absurdity of such notions, is seen from the succeeding verses; “Now consider how great this *man* was, unto whom the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.” “But he [Melchisedec] whose *descent* is not counted from them [Levites] received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises.” From these declarations, we discover that this Melchisedec was a *man*, and had *descent*; but what does the apostle mean by saying that he was “without father, mother, or descent?” I answer that he did not allude either to the person of Christ or Melchisedec; for each had a father and mother; but to the principle of authority or the holy priesthood, which has existed from all eternity, and has neither father, mother, or descent; and is without beginning in days, or end of life. The apparent contradiction in the apostles phraseology, in all probability, has appeared in consequence of the ignorance of the translator, or some careless transcriber.

The apostle holds out the idea, that this priesthood is a kingly one, which appears to be correct, from the fact, that it emanated from God, and He is a King of kings, and Lord of lords; and it is also the authority of his kingdom, and by it, as I have before mentioned, Melchisedec reigned as a king over the inhabitants of the city of Salem. This idea is corroborated by Josephus, who says: “Now the king of Salem met him [Abraham] at a certain place called the *Kings’ dale*, where Melchisedec king of the city of Salem received him. That name signifies *the righteous King*: and such he was without doubt, insomuch that on this account he was made

*He. vii, 1—3.

the priest of God; however, they afterward called Salem *Jerusalem*."* From this we learn that the Melchisedec priesthood, may be with propriety termed, the *Righteous kingly priesthood*; or to reverse it, a *Kingly priesthood or authority adapted to the law of righteousness*.

It is evident that the only form of government, by which the people were governed in these early times, that met the approbation of the Lord was the *Patriarchal*. This government, was strictly ecclesiastical, yet it included all the rules and regulations necessary for the well-being of society, and preservation of good morals. The chief ruler was the patriarch, or high-priest, who reigned as king by virtue of the office of the priesthood which he held. Indeed, there are reasons for believing, that all those small kingdoms of the land of Canaan, including those governed by the shepherd kings, were originally only so many branches of the kingdom of God, and each formed a separate organization by itself: yet all probably were accountable to a presiding officer, or quorum of officers appointed by the Lord to preside over the whole kingdom on earth.

Melchisedec presided over a church, or branch of the kingdom of this kind, which was at Salem; and in all probability, Abimeleck of Gerar, was a king of this description. All the shepherd kings, and those of Canaan, originally presided by virtue of this priesthood; but as these kingdoms degenerated into apostacy, they incorporated with their religion, many mythological institutions; and into their government many political, and despotic, forms and rules, and each king in time assumed the title of *absolute monarch*. I infer all this, from some few hints dropped by the sacred historians: for instance, such as the account of Melchisedec reigning as king, in Salem, the profound reverence that Abimeleck had for the Lord, many things connected with the biography of

*Josephus, Book 1st., chap. x.

Abraham, the circumstance of Moses finding a priest among the Midianites, who had a knowledge of God, the whole history of Baalam the prophet, (who in one instance however is called a soothsayer,) and many other allusions to the condition of the nations, with regard to their relationship with God, too numerous to mention. One thing is certain, no people so much deserve the extreme severity of God's judgments, as a set of apostates; and it is evident that these kingdoms had corrupted the holy priesthood, sacrificed to idols, and turned their temples into public brothel houses. They thus provoked the Lord, and kindled the flame of his anger against them, till he sent the Israelites to destroy and dispossess them. This idea of their being apostates, in a great measure, accounts for the severity of his judgments upon them. It also sustains our idea of the object the Lord had in view in raising up the Israelite nation.

For proof, that the priesthood existed on earth in the days of Abraham, I refer the reader to the apostle Paul's epistle to the Hebrews, particularly to the seventh chapter. Moses in his brief account of this age, frequently mentions that there were *elders*, and *priests*; but some of the modern writers, conjecture they were idolators. This is only supposition, and be it as it may, it is evident the authority used in the heathen temples or at their alters, was only a corruption of the holy priesthood. God first instituted the offering of sacrifices, (not however to idolatrous gods,) and gave the appropriate names to the various grades of office, and when the nations degenerated into idolatry, they retained these names, and sacrificed to their deities.

Moses referring to the circumstance of Joseph buying the land of Egypt, says: "Only the land of the *priests* bought he not; for the priests had a portion assigned them of Pharaoh and did eat their portion which Pharaoh gave them."*

*Ge. xlvii, 22.

It is said, when Jacob died: "And Joseph went up to bury his father: and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the *elders* of his house, and all the *elders* of the land of Egypt."* It is also said, that Joseph married the daughter of the *priest of On*.† And when we consider the piety of Joseph, his untiring zeal in the cause of righteousness, and aversion to idolatry, we cannot for a moment suppose that such an alliance was made with the daughter of an idolatrous priest; not that Joseph would have polluted his piety by so doing; but the antipathy that existed against each other's religion, would have imposed a barrier in the way. If the foregoing quotations are not positive, I regard them at any rate, as the strongest kind of presumptive evidence, to sustain the before mentioned idea of the priesthood. I cannot consistently close this chapter, without saying something more of what is written in the Book of Job, who in all probability lived in this age.—What he says about the "*sons of God*," sustains our idea that there were many people in this age, who had a knowledge of the Lord, and who had received the benefits of the priesthood, and thus formed an allegiance with God, and were numbered with His family.

The probability is, that this priesthood was conferred by the father upon the son, from Abraham to Joseph; moreover it is quite probable, that the twelve sons of Jacob were all priests, for they are regarded as patriarchs. But after the decease of Joseph, it seems that idolatry triumphed in Egypt.—The Israelites were reduced to bondage, and how much they feared God and respected the rules of his kingdom, from this to Moses, is uncertain.

*Ge. 1, 7.

†Ge. xli, 45.

CHAPTER III.

Additional Evidence of the Election of the Israelite nation—Moses lived with Jethro the priest of Midian forty years.—Moses Led the Tribes of Israel out of Egypt—Jethro went to Moses in the wilderness, and instructed him how to organize the Congregation; he also officiated at the altar and offered sacrifices—Aaron and his Sons were inducted into the Lower Order of Priesthood—The difference between the Aaronic and the Melchisedec Priesthoods, &c., &c.

It is mentioned in the preceeding chapter, that the Lord chose or elected and raised up the Israelite nation, to receive His oracles, and to be stewards over the affairs of His kingdom; but I will now introduce, from the scriptures, some additional evidence to sustain the idea.

Moses, in his address to the house of Israel just previous to his death, says: "And because He loved thy fathers, therefore He chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt."* "For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth."†, Isaiah says: "But thou Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend."‡ Stephen the

*De. iv, 37.

†De. xiv. 2.

‡Is. xli, 8—see also Is. xliv, 1, 2.

martyr, said in his discourse to the Jews: "This is he [Moses] that was in the church in the wilderness, with the angel which spake to him in mount Sinai, and with our fathers; *who received the lively oracles* to give unto us."*

I regard these quotations as conclusive testimony, to establish the above idea; but there is much more that is satisfactory to corroborate it in the apostle Paul's "Epistle to the Romans," which the reader can examine at leisure.

Now I trust that I have adduced sufficient evidence to convince every candid person, that the Lord established His kingdom with the house of Israel, and of course that He gave them the priesthood; but to what extent they enjoyed the rights and privileges of this kingdom, and its authority, will be seen hereafter.—But to proceed with my history.

It is evident the Israelites in a measure corrupted the priesthood while they were in Egypt; and that they were to a certain extent enveloped in a spiritual darkness at the time the Lord delivered them from their oppression. The manner in which they were delivered, is familiar to almost every body; therefore, I shall omit the particulars of it, in order to immediately proceed with the subject-matter of my history.

Moses, after he had slain the Egyptian, fled to the land of Midian where he became acquainted with Jethro, a priest of the Midianites, with whom he resided forty years, and ultimately married his daughter. The Midianites are supposed by some to have been the descendants of Abraham, from the fact, he had a son by his wife Keturah, whom he called Midian. This perhaps will account for the continuation of the priesthood down to Jethro.

This association with this priest of Midian, afforded Moses a good opportunity to become acquainted with all the blessings and privileges of the holy priesthood: and in all probability Jethro consecrated him to the office of it. At the ex-

piration of these forty years, the Lord or his angel appeared to him, and instructed him to go to Egypt, and lead the tribes of Israel from thence to the land of Canaan. He complied with this command, and the Lord sent Aaron to assist him, and they in due time succeeded in leading the chosen people of the Lord out of Egypt.

After they had crossed the Red Sea, Jethro hearing of the prosperity of Moses, and the children of Israel, set out to pay him a visit: and as soon as he reached the place of his destination, and Moses had related all the circumstances connected with their deliverance and journey to him, he then gave Moses such advice as he thought was good; which was to organize the congregation of Israel, by appointing rulers or judges of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, &c., which counsel he cheerfully received, and acted accordingly. Some suppose this Jethro, was an idolatrous priest, which is certainly a great absurdity, for this reason. It is said, that when he came to Moses, he "rejoiced for all the goodness which the Lord had done to Israel;" and that he "blessed the Lord," and spoke in the highest terms of His greatness and majesty. It is also said, he offered sacrifices to God upon the altar that Moses had built, and that Aaron, and all the elders of Israel, associated with, and cordially received him. All of this, does not look much like the works of an idolatrous priest.—What would we think of a Christian society, that would admit an idolatrous priest into their church to preach, advise, and administer ordinances? I leave the reader to answer this question. But says one, perhaps Moses, out of courtesy, suffered him to do this, because he was his father-in-law. I reply, that it is quite probable Moses had as much respect, if not more, for the Lord and the principles of righteousness, as he would have for an idolatrous priest, although he was his father-in-law. Indeed, I am confident that no intelligent person, can carefully read the eighteenth chapter of the "Book

of Exodus" without being convinced that Jethro was a righteous man, and a notable priest of the most high God. Thus admitting, the Israelites corrupted the priesthood while they were in Egypt, we have discovered the probable way it was restored to them. Again, it is abundantly evident, that the gospel was preached to them, and the kingdom of God organized among them. The apostle Paul says: "For unto us was the gospel preached as well as unto them, (children of Israel in the wilderness;) but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it."* Again the apostle says: "Moreover brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud, and *in the sea*."† With all the ingenuity I have, I cannot interpret this in any way, other than that the house of Israel were baptized in the Red Sea, by Moses and others whom he had commissioned for that purpose; and were overshadowed or baptized with the Spirit of God which appeared, and rested down upon them like a cloud. But says one, were they not baptized in the sea, when they crossed it? I answer that it is said, they passed through the sea dry-shod, or as on dry ground; and the idea of baptizing people *in the sea* on dry ground, would be a novel thing in the bible indeed. The idea is, they were baptized *unto* Moses, the same as the Jews were baptized *unto* John the Baptist in Jordan. Moses like John, set forth or proclaimed the doctrine of baptism, and baptized those who believed, or authorized some other one to do it. Some of the most approved historians, admit the ordinance of baptism was practiced long before the commencement of the Christian era, which I have no reason to dispute; but I contend that it was an ordinance of the gospel then, as well as now.

I regard the foregoing passages of scripture, as positive

*He. iv, 2.

†1. Co. x, 1, 2.

evidence, that the gospel was preached, and the ordinance of baptism administered, to the children of Israel in the wilderness. But it appears, they were a stubborn and wicked race of people, and often complained of the Lord, and rebelled against Moses. For this reason, the Lord gave them one of the most despotic laws, that ever human beings were made subject to. The apostle Peter said, it was a "yoke too hard for us or our fathers to bear." Paul says, "it was a curse to them, and a law of carnal commandments:" he also says, "It was added in consequence of transgressions." Added to what? not to a system of heathen mythology, nor to the law of Egypt, neither to that of any other nation. But I am certain the gospel was preached unto them, and I know of nothing else to which this ceremonial law could have been added. The idea, that it was added in consequence of transgressions, is sufficient evidence that it was intended as a curse, or punishment for their stubbornness. Again it appears, that it was appended to the gospel, to continue only until Christ should come and abolish it.

I have now arrived at the place, where I can introduce the Aaronic, or lower order of priesthood, which I have before said, was only an appendage; or in other words, only a part of this grand principle of authority. Why I call it the lower order, is because, that it is not the fulness of the priesthood, or authority to perform the works of God. I mean by this, that those who are made priests after the order of Melchisedec, enjoy all the rights, and privileges of this authority; but those who are made priests after the order of Aaron, only possess a part; yet all that their grade of office guarantees to them: hence, the Aaronic, or Levitical priesthood, is only a branch of the Melchisedec; and is called the Aaronic, because it was conferred upon Aaron, and his sons, to continue hereditary throughout their generations; and it was their place as bishops or priests, to preside over all the differ-

ent grades of officers, that came under their jurisdiction: and it was called the Levitical, because the men of the tribe of Levi, were chosen to administer in all the various offices of this priesthood, instead of all the first-born of the tribes of Israel.

Some suppose, this lower order of priesthood had a beginning with Aaron; but the inconsistency of such an idea, is exposed by placing it in conjunction with the following scripture: "And take unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him from among the children of Israel, that they may minister unto me in the *priest's office*."* The Lord did not command Moses to induct Aaron into a new order of priesthood just instituted; but speaks as though it was of long standing, and well understood by all. But to be brief—I infer from the above, and many other like sayings written in the bible,† that this order of priesthood is but a branch, or one of the departments of the Melchisedec, and is of equal antiquity. Although I admit that the giving of the law is regarded as a new dispensation, yet by no means ^{it} does the idea imply, the institution of a new priesthood.

But during the existence of the Mosaic ritual, it was confined to Aaron's progeny, and the tribe of Levi, and in particular appropriated to the service, and performance of the ceremonies, and institutions of this law.

That the grade of office, which Aaron held, was inferior to that which Moses held, is evident from the following: "And he said, hear now my words: if there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all his house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant

* Ex xxviii, 1. † See Ex. xxviii, 41. Ex. xxix, 9, and xxx. 20.

Moses.”* Thus Moses had a privilege to converse with the Lord face to face; but Aaron, and other prophets that were then in Israel, were not entitled to this prerogative.

There are some things connected with the account of the personal appearance of the Lord to the patriarchs, and prophets, that are very singular and strange, yet sublime, and consistent with good reason. It is said, that the Lord appeared to Abraham, and dined with him; but it is evident, He did not appear in His glory: for when Abraham saw him, and the angels with him, he thought they were three men. It is also recorded, that Jacob wrestled with the Lord, and conversed with him face to face. Moses and the seventy elders of Israel at one time, saw the Lord; but there appears to be some difference in the manner in which these elders saw him, and that in which, Moses did at another time. All the congregation of Israel saw the cloud, and heard the voice of the Lord from it; but did not see him, and talk with him face to face as a man talketh with his friend, as Moses did. But there is an apparent contradiction in the terms employed in recording this matter, which needs some explanation: Moses made this request of the Lord. “And he said, I beseech thee show me thy glory.” He was answered thus: “And He said, thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.” This answer, is understood or explained, by the request made.—Now when Moses came down from the mountain, the glory of the Lord shone on or from his face, so much so, that the children of Israel could not look upon him; therefore, he covered it with a veil: so no doubt the glory of the Lord is in His countenance or shines from His face; therefore, the idea the Lord conveyed to Moses was, that no man in his common state of this life can see His glory, that is, the full extent of it, and live. The account that follows this answer of the Lord to Moses, corroborates my

* Nu. xii, 6—8.

explanation: "And the Lord said, behold, there is a place by me, and thou shall stand upon a rock, and it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: and I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts; *but my face shall not be seen.*"* Christ, and the apostles, seemingly contradict the idea of any man seeing God, even in the manner Abraham, Jacob, Moses, and others did. Moses and other historians explain these accounts by relating the manner in which the Lord appeared to these men; but when Christ and the apostles say, "no man hath seen God," they speak of Him, as He exists, in the full sense of the word; that is, they include all His glory, and majesty: for in this sense no man has seen God; in other words, the fullness of His glory: for it seems to be reserved to be shown at some future period. But one of the observations of Christ, in my opinion, serves as a key to unlock the whole of this mystery: "Not that any man hath seen the Father save he which is of God; he hath seen the Father."† It is probable Christ here alluded to himself; but the same rule may be with propriety applied to others, such as Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Melchisedec, Jacob, Moses, and others, who were priests of the same order that He was of: and indeed, all were priests of the most high God; but the mission assigned to these men, differed from the one allotted to Christ. In a word, all these great and holy men, or noted priests after the order of Melchisedec, were only so many members of the grand cabinet of the Great God, and were endowed with plenipoten-tiary power or authority; and of course, had the right to converse with Him face to face, and of receiving information from Him, to communicate to the subjects of the kingdom.

The following is satisfactory evidence, that Moses was a great high-priest after the order of Melchisedec: "I will raiseo

* See latter part of xxxiii, of Ex. † John vi, 46.

“them up a prophet from among their brethren like unto thee” [Moses.] Peter said the prophet alluded to here, is Christ: and the apostle Paul says, He is a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec: hence, as He was to be like Moses; Moses must have been like Him in possession of the same priesthood. This is corroborated by David, who says, Moses was a priest of God.

Moses by the authority of this priesthood presided over the house of Israel, and was their law-giver; and was blessed with the privilege of conversing with God face to face, and even to see him; but Aaron, and his sons, received an inferior office; therefore, they did not see God as Moses did; neither did they converse with him face to face; but received information from Him by means of the *Urim and Thummim*, through the agency of angels, by visions, and by the Spirit of God. But it appears, in consequence of the wickedness of the children of Israel, Moses was taken from them, and no one was ordained to succeed him and hold the same office. Joshua succeeded him as a leader, and judge in Israel; but did not hold so high an office in the kingdom of God. The Lord commanded Moses thus: “Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay thy hand upon him; and set him before Eleazer the priest, and before all the congregation: and give him a charge in their sight. And thou shalt put *some* of thine honour upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient.”* This expression, “thou shalt put some of thine honour upon him,” shows that Moses ordained him to an office inferior to the one he held himself. And it will be remembered, those who have received the fulness of the priesthood, have a right to officiate in, and ordain others to all inferior ranks of office. Joshua was certainly a very eminent man, and had great faith, yet he was not a high-priest of the Melchisedec order

* Nu. xxvii, 18—20.

like Moses. Furthermore, it will be seen from what I have before said, that when the Lord took Moses from the children of Israel, he left them no other priesthood, but the Aaronic.

Moses says, it was the intention of the Lord, to make the house of Israel a kingdom of priests; but it appears, that in consequence of their wickedness, this never was as yet fully accomplished; but will be when they are restored to their former inheritance, and the kingdom given to them again. Yet during the elapse of time, from Moses to Christ, it appears, they were the only people, who had the priesthood, or in any respect possessed the kingdom of God, and all who desired to be partakers of its blessings, were under the necessity of being adopted into the family of Israel.

The sons of Aaron, were hereditary heirs of this inferior order of priesthood; for the Lord gave it to them with a covenant; or in other words, he made a covenant with Aaron, that it should, on condition of faithfulness, continue with him and his posterity forever.

The form of government instituted for Israel, was ecclesiastical, and as far as their authority extended, it was patriarchal: the sons of Aaron as bishops, (or high-priests of this inferior order of priesthood,) presided over the spiritual affairs, and all the Levitical priests officiated under their direction; they also had judges to oversee their temporal, or political affairs, and to legislate for them; but more or less under the direction of the presiding priest, who obtained the word of the Lord by means of the *Urim and Thummim*. Josephus says, this instrument was a transparent or shining stone, which was consecrated to the Lord and placed in Aaron's breastplate, and that somehow by its shining, or reflections, he obtained the word of the Lord; but he says, it ceased to shine about one hundred and fifty years before Christ.*

It is quite probable; that several of the Jewish prophets,

* See Josephus, Book III, chap viii.

by their faith received the Melchisedec priesthood from God, or an angel sent to confer it upon them. It is evident, that Samuel, David, Solomon, Elijah, Isaiah and others, received it, for some of them offered sacrifices ; but they having received the highest order of priesthood, had a right to officiate in all the lower offices of it. This accounts for these men officiating at the altar, who were not of the tribe of Levi.

In process of time, the Israelites became corrupt in their notions, and desired to have a king like other nations, which displeased the Lord ; however, He granted their request. From this to the appearance of Christ, they had their blessings, and their afflictions : at times they were faithful to God, at others they turned to idolatry, and the Lord suffered them to be brought into bondage, and pressed with heavy afflictions. But at no time, did they consider themselves under a more severe curse, than when they were scattered or driven from their land ; for this simple reason, they knew how to appreciate the privilege of living a separate people by themselves, where they could worship God under their own vine and fig-tree unmolested.

CHAPTER IV.

The Apostate condition of the Jews at the First Advent of Christ—The Object of Christ's Mission.—In what respect His Kingdom is not of This World—His kingdom, or Church consists of an Organized Government on the Earth—The Holy Priesthood was given to the Apostles and other Officers of the Primitive Church—The Gospel of Christ, &c. &c., in the First Century.

IN order to take a correct view, and give a true account, of the priesthood in this age, I deem it necessary, by way of introduction, to make a few remarks upon the condition of the world, at the time our Saviour made His appearance in the flesh. Perhaps there never was a nation in a more deplorable condition than the Jews were at this period; their national affairs were in a confused state, and their ecclesiastical institutions were not less deranged. And there is nothing better authenticated, than the fact, that the Jews at this period had corrupted the priesthood, and were under a broken covenant. For several years previous, and also at this time, they were divided into various religious factions, and in consequence of which, there was a perpetual scene of contention and disputation. They in a manner rebelled against God, who in part withdrew His Spirit from them. It is true, they professed faith in the law of Moses, and the writings of the prophets; but they previously adopted the unwarrantable prac-

tice of construing them to suit their own views and purposes ; hence, as one man's or set of men's interpretations did not suit others, there arose violent contending parties, which finally resulted in the organization of the Pharisee, Sadducee, Essinee, and other societies. But it is very singular, that notwithstanding their degenerate condition, they were in earnest expectation, looking for the immediate appearance of the Messiah ; but their notions with regard to the manner He was to come, were incorrect. The prevailing opinion was, that He would come in the majesty of His power, that is, in great pomp and splendor, and with an air of triumph ascend the throne of David, remove the yoke of bondage from the Jews, restore the kingdom to Israel, and then reign as King of kings, and Lord of lords. These being their most sanguine expectations, they thought it too humiliating, for them to stoop so low as to receive the quiet, meek, and humble Son of God, who after the flesh, originated in a family that were in indigent circumstances. Indeed, with a pompous air, they disdained the idea of receiving a Messiah that was cradled in a manger, and who was the reputed son of a carpenter. In their pride they were blinded, and did not see that some of the most plain predictions of the prophets, were being fulfilled daily before their eyes : and in their haughtiness they ascended the pinnacle of self-righteousness ; but they became giddy, and tottered to ruin, and fell with a most tremendous crash ; and the most of them were laid low in the dust, and the few that were left, were reduced to a most dejected condition.

Christ accused them of making void the law through the tradition of their elders, and of teaching for doctrine, the commandments of men. They certainly amalgamated numerous traditions, and superstitious ceremonies with the law, and probably created new ecclesiastics ; and thus by degrees changed the law, infringed upon the stipulations of the cove-

nant, and corrupted the priesthood, till all had lost their efficacy; or in other words, were made void. I wish to be understood, as speaking of them in a national capacity, and not individual; for it is evident, several retained their integrity, and obeyed the commandments of God, according to the best knowledge they had; but they were so far in the minority, that they had not the power to reform the nation.

It is evident the priesthood, the Pharisees, and other sects of this age had, was an assumption, or a corruption of the one given to their fathers. And it appears, they had so completely broken the covenant the Lord made with all Israel at the time they were in the wilderness of Sinai, and corrupted the office of the priesthood to such an extent, there was no authority that God acknowledged as valid, left among them to administer the law, except it was continued down through the immediate progenitors of John the Baptist. But from the whole account of John, I infer that the office of the priesthood was renewed to him, and that an angel of God consecrated him to it: for it is said, "the spirit and power of Elias was given to him," that is, he received his priesthood, or authority from Elias. Josephus corroborates this idea by recording the fact, as I mentioned in the preceding chapter, that the Urim and Thummim ceased to shine, or perform its office, about one hundred and fifty years before Christ. This instrument or oracle particularly belonged to the priests; but as soon as they transgressed and corrupted their priesthood, it ceased to shine; hence, it appears, that some time before Christ made His appearance, they broke the covenant, and lost the necessary authority to legally or effectually administer the law. That there was a regular lineal succession of priests, who nominally held this authority, I do not pretend to deny: but the idea is, they corrupted it to such an extent, that God would not bless them; or in other words, it in a great degree, lost its efficacy.

That which was handed down through the immediate progenitors of John, was probably the most pure, yet it seems, there was so much defect, that in order for him to accomplish his mission, it was necessary for it to be renewed to him from heaven, or from a pure source.

The Gentiles at this period, were in a state of idolatry, and without the knowledge of God; and the Jews were in an apostate condition: and thus the whole world, were in darkness, and the only way God could establish his kingdom on earth again, was by renewing the covenant of priesthood; or in other words, to restore it to His saints.

Now the great and grand object Christ had in view, in appearing to the world in the manner in which he did, may be summed up in one idea, and that is, the redemption of the fallen race of mankind. But it is an established principle in the economy of God and man, that whatever is first in conception, is the last in execution; for instance, a man conceives the idea of building himself a mansionhouse: the object he has in view, is a comfortable and permanent dwellingplace; but all the toil and mechanical operations, are antecedent to his inhabiting this building: so it is, with regard to the great redemption of man, and his induction into the everlasting kingdom of heaven to enjoy eternal happiness, which was the first and great object conceived of in the mind of God, with regard to the affairs of man; but it was necessary that many preparatory works should go before its consummation.

The works that Christ came to perform preparatory to the completion of the above work, were first, to establish His kingdom, or reorganize it on earth, and to make known the gospel or in full the plan of salvation; secondly, to be an example of piety, patience, and righteousness; thirdly, to be offered upon the cross as a sacrifice to atone for the sin of man. The divinity of Christ does not particularly come

within the province of my history ; but I will here take the liberty of saying, that myself, and the society to which I belong, are firm believers in this doctrine, and that in a scriptural sense, “He is God manifest in the flesh.”

Now as the kingdom of God, is inseparably connected with the holy priesthood, I deem it prudent, in order that there should be no misunderstanding, to make a few remarks about the manner in which it exists. I have already said, that it consists of an organized government ; but some dispute this, and on the contrary contend that it only consists of the individual enjoyments of the righteous ; or in other words, it is the Spirit of the Lord shed abroad in their hearts. If this latter idea is correct, any labor in search of the kingdom of God as being an organized government on earth, would be fruitless. Those who attempt to sustain this idea, assert that the kingdom enters the heart of man, instead of him being required to be inducted into it ; and for evidence to prove such a preposterous notion, they refer to the following declaration of Christ : “For behold, the kingdom of God is *within you*.”* Any person will discover from the context, that Christ addressed these words to the Jews, and in particular to the Pharisees ; therefore, the word “*you*” personates them, and we cannot consistently say, the Spirit of God dwelt in their hearts ; for they were wicked in the extreme. But the matter stands thus, Christ came into the world, was clothed with this royal priesthood from heaven, and was literally a King, and Lawgiver : He chose his disciples from among the Jews, and commissioned them with the proper authority to act in His name ; hence, to say the least, the kingdom of God actually existed in embryo in the midst, or within the bounds of the nation. This saying “*within you*” may be with propriety read *among you, or within the bounds of your domain*. I will examine one more passage with reference to

* Lu. xvii, 21.

the above idea of the kingdom of God : which will suffice for the present, it reads thus : “ Jesus answered, my kingdom is not of this world.”* In the patriarchal dispensation, as I have before mentioned, the people of God were a distinct and separate people by themselves, they lived together, that is, in a city or country, where they could enjoy each other’s society, and of course, they possessed the territory. Their government was a triunion of ecclesiastical, civil, and military power, yet all were under the supervision of their king, who reigned by virtue of the holy priesthood; however, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, owing to their circumstances were pilgrims and strangers in a strange country; but it was not so with their posterity, who were under the guidance of Moses and Joshua, led out of Egypt, and located in the land of Canaan. The government established for them, was ecclesiastical; and the territory they possessed, was the above land. Jacob prophesied : “ The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come.”† About the time Christ appeared, the reign of government was taken from the legal successor of David, and given to Herod the Idumean, and the Jews had corrupted the priesthood; therefore, every thing was in a state of derangement. They expected, that when Christ should come, He would restore the kingdom to Israel, which He offered to do; for said He : “ O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, *and ye would not.*” The apostles supposed the time had come for the kingdom to be restored to Israel: for they interrogated Jesus thus : “ Lord wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel ?” He answered them as follows : “ It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put

* Jno. xviii, 36. † Ge. xlix, §10.

in His own power." It appears, all those who believed Christ to be the true Messiah, supposed the time had come to fulfill the prophecy of Daniel concerning the kingdom of God, who speaking of the Son of man says: "And there was given Him dominion, and glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve and obey Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom, that which shall not be destroyed." "But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess it forever, even forever and ever." When this is fulfilled, Christ will subject the whole earth to Himself, which will be the territory of His kingdom, He will then reign King of nations as He now reigns King of saints. With the expectation, that the time had arrived for all these things to be fulfilled, they were for taking Him, and by force place Him, upon the throne of Israel.

Jerusalem is to be the seat of government when the Lord gathers Israel from their long dispersion, and restores the kingdom to them; but as the Jews rejected Christ, and when He was willing to gather Israel they would not; therefore, the time for the establishment of the glorious kingdom of God, when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of Christ, was postponed till they are sufficiently punished for their wickedness, and are willing to receive Him; therefore, Christ said: "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."* He said on another occasion: "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation, who shall bring forth the fruits thereof."† Again: "And when He was come near, He beheld the city and wept over it, saying, if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but

* Lu. xxi, 24. † Mat. xxi, 43.

now they are hid from thine eyes.”* Things that pertained to their peace, were the kingdom of God, that Daniel and other prophets, have said so much about, and the restoration of those Israelites who were scattered among the distant nations. The new covenant, the prophets have so frequently mentioned, that the Lord is to make with the house of Israel, was delayed; and indeed, all these glorious events before mentioned, were postponed till the last days, or till the Lord shall receive Israel again to mercy; therefore, the only kingdom Christ established on earth in that day, was His spiritual one; or in other words, only the spiritual part of it, which was disconnected with local, and territorial affairs; for this reason, His kingdom was not of this world. Christ was not of this world, the priesthood was from heaven, and the organization of the kingdom pertained only to those things which are connected with the spiritual salvation of mankind; therefore, it may be emphatically said, His kingdom was not of this world; but after all is said, it is no argument against the idea, that the kingdom of God consists of an organized government on earth, and that all men are required to enter into it.

Christ also said: “If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but *now* is my kingdom not from hence.” This shows the difference between the kingdom established in the days of the apostles, and the one spoken of by Daniel, John the Revelator, and others. At the time the latter is to be established, the prophets tell us that Christ will appear in the character of a mighty conqueror or chieftain, subdue His enemies, and destroy the wicked.

Now the house of Israel were the *elect* people of God, and the kingdom by right belonged to them; but those at Jerusalem, (where the seat of government, will be when the kingdom is restored to them,) as a nation rejected it when it

* Lu. xix, 41, 42.

was offered to them; therefore, according to the prediction of our Saviour, it was transmitted to the Gentiles. As soon as this was done, the Jews were given over to unbelief and to destruction; their city was soon destroyed, and they were carried captive into all nations; and ever since, they have been subject to almost perpetual tribulation. The apostle Paul, while reasoning upon this subject, compares the house of Israel to a tame olive-tree, and the Gentiles to a wild one, which he says was grafted into the tame one. In reasoning thus, he supports the idea, that in and through the seed of Abraham, all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Thus the Gentiles were transplanted into the family of Israel, which fulfilled the prediction of one of the prophets: "I will call them my people who were not my people." Much more might be said, about the taking of the kingdom from the Jews, and giving it to the Gentiles; but as it is, a matter of notoriety throughout the scriptures, I deem it unnecessary; therefore, I will immediately proceed to that which at present seems to be of more importance.

Now the reader will unquestionably bear in mind, that no kingdom in an organized state, can exist either in heaven or on earth, without at least being constituted of four things; first, a king; secondly, commissioned officers; thirdly, a code of laws; fourthly, subjects: and when we speak of a political kingdom, we must include territory. Christ was, and is, the King of this kingdom of God, the apostles and others who received the priesthood, were the commissioned officers; the gospel is the law or code of laws; and all the members of the church, are the subjects. And it will be remembered, that this kingdom was established on earth, expressly for the benefit of the whole human race, and that individuals by entering into it, will enter into favor with God, be numbered with His family, and be separated from the world.

When John the Baptist commenced his mission, he pro-

claimed, that the kingdom of God was at hand. Christ, before His resurrection, proclaimed the same, and also commanded His disciples to do it. The idea is, the necessary authority was on earth to organize it, and the preliminary arrangements were being made. He frequently declared to the Jews, that He had received His authority from His Father; that is, His Father sent him; therefore, I contend the holy priesthood is the authority given to Him by the Father, and by the power of it, He created the earth and all things upon it. Paul declares Him to be the author of the whole sublunary creation; therefore, as the prophet Isaiah says, "He is the everlasting Father;" that is, He is the father of this earth, and of man; but is the Son of God, and brother of man, in consequence of the flesh. By the power of this priesthood, He organized His kingdom on earth, has thus far accomplished the work of redemption, will ultimately consummate it, and reign till He has put all enemies under His feet; and then, He will deliver up the earth, and the kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all. In a word, every work that is in the least connected with the redemption of man, is the work of Christ, and by the power of the same priesthood that He created the earth and man, He will redeem them. But says one, this idea appears to me, to be very strange. I reply, that if we credit His own testimony, it is no more strange than true: for He plainly declared, that He received His authority from His Father. Indeed, nothing is more evident from the scriptures, than that He has the holy priesthood. Paul says: "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful *High-priest* in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people."* "Wherefore holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High-Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus."†

* He. ii, 17. † He. iii, 1.

Thus, He is called a High-priest and Apostle, in the character of a mediator, to reconcile mankind to God.

Again the apostle says: "Seeing then that we have a great High-priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an High-priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."* "So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high-priest; but He that said unto Him, thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. And He saith in another place, thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec." "And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal Salvation unto all them that obey him; called of God an high-priest after the order of Melchisedec."† Much more scriptural evidence might be adduced, to prove that Christ is a great high-priest after the order of Melchisedec; but the foregoing will suffice for the present. The eminent station that He holds in the kingdom of God, is seen from the following: "And having an high-priest over the *House of God*."‡ "*House of God*" here is synonymous with His church or kingdom; hence, Jesus as a high-priest presides over the kingdom of God. The whole force of Paul's reasoning in his epistle to the Hebrews, is to show the superiority of the priesthood which Christ had over that of Aaron. But the question is now, whether or not, this superior order of priesthood, was given to the apostles; or in other words, did it extend to the Christian church, or was it restricted to Christ? Some are of opinion that, because Christ ever lives and reigns as a high-priest, there is no necessity for the priesthood to be conferred upon His ministers; but this is certainly a great absurdity: for Melchisedec, Abraham, Jethro, Moses and others, had it: and if the saints of God had it anterior to Christ, and it proved such a blessing to them, wherein is

* He. iv, 14, 15. † He. v, 5, 6, 9, 10. ‡ He. x, 21.

the propriety of withholding it from the church in the Christian dispensation. I reply, that God is the same unchangeable being in all ages, and His mode of saving the human race is the same; therefore, it requires the same principle of authority to administer the precepts of the gospel, in one age that it does in another; consequently, I should be irresistably led to the conclusion that the priesthood was given to the Christian church, if there was not one syllable of evidence in the New Testament, to prove it. But there is an abundance of scriptural testimony to establish this, without doing it by the force of analogical reasoning.

Now Jesus said to His disciples, before His resurrection: "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."* In my opinion, this simply means it was the will of the Father that the disciples of Christ should have the priesthood: for as soon as they received it; in one sense of the word, they received the kingdom: for they were then prepaed to preach the gospel, and baptize subjects into this kingdom. The saying, "to give you the kingdom," alluded to the power, or is the same as to say, *to give you power or authority*; and there is no difficulty in establishing or organizing a kingdom, if the proper individual or individuals, have the power or authority to do it.

Again, Christ said, while praying to the Father for His disciples: "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world."† It is a matter of notoriety, that the Father sent Jesus into the world, as a priest after the order of Melchisedec; therefore, according to the above, it must of necessity follow, that the apostles were sent into the world as priests of this order. Indeed, I regard the above quotation as conclusive testimony, to sustain the position I have taken; but the following, is incontrovertible: "ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you,

* Lu. xii, 32. † Jno. xvii, 18.

that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain ; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, He may give it you.”* The election or choice mentioned here, I have explained in a preceeding chapter ; but said Jesus, “ I have ordained you.” Ordination is the act of conferring power or authority, and in a scriptural sense the consecration of an individual to the office of the priesthood ; and it is not probable, Christ gave His apostles power that He did not have, or consecrated them to a priesthood, which He was not in possession of Himself. The most reasonable explanation of scripture, is the best one, and certainly, it is the most reasonable, that the above quotation, literally records the circumstance of Christ ordaining His disciples to the office of the priesthood. It is frequently mentioned in the Evangelists, that Christ chose and ordained His disciples.† The foregoing is evidence of undoubted authority, that the priesthood, was given to the disciples of Christ ; but we will now see what was the extent of their power or authority.

Now as I have before mentioned every, work that is in the least, connected with the redemption of man, is the work of Christ : for He has the charge of all sacred affairs connected with this sublunary creation. He is our King, and He is also the Redeemer of the world. Every thing that is done, that pertains to the kingdom of God, or the redemption of man, must be done in His name : for said Peter, “ there is no other name given under heaven, whereby man can be saved, except it is the name of Jesus Christ.” “ Whatsoever” said Jesus, “ you ask the Father, ask it in my name and it shall be given you.” He created man, and it is His business to redeem his lost and fallen race : for said He, “ I came to save that which is lost.” He was offered upon the cross, as a sacrifice for the sin of the world, and “ died” says Paul, “ to reconcile man to God.” But how could the human

* Jno. xv, 16. † See Mar. iii, 14.

family be reconciled to God by his death, when three-fourths of them knew nothing of it? I answer, that included in the gospel, which is good news and glad tidings of great joy, are these important truths: "Jesus Christ and Him crucified." This gospel is the word of reconciliation, and it was and is, the business of Christ to preach it to all the world; and all those who believe it, obey its precepts, and hold out faithful to the end, will have eternal life; but it does not of necessity follow, that He in person, was to go to all the world: for He had a perfect right to commission men, or empower them to preach this gospel, and administer it in His name. The apostle is definite upon this, who says: "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."* Was there ever a declaration more emphatic? Jesus came into the world, died an ignominious death, established His kingdom, commenced the proclamation of His gospel, deputed His apostles and others, sent them into all the world to preach it in His name, and then resumed His seat at the right hand of the Father, where he now sitteth to make intercessions for His people. Thus the apostles were, the "ambassadors for Christ," and the word, or ministry of reconciliation, was committed to them, and Paul says, "we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." Therefore, the apostles were Christ's envoys extraordinary, endowed with plenipotentary power, to negotiate with the whole world, and if possible, reconcile them to God, and at the same time, make known the superior

* 2 Co. v, 18—20.

advantages of His glorious or commendable kingdom, and adopt souls into it.

Again, the apostle says: "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, *but also in power* and in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance."* The word of the gospel, is the letter in which the precepts are set forth; but the power alluded to, is the priesthood or authority, with which the servants of God are empowered to administer it to all the believers; then comes the Holy Ghost, and the assurance. Christ said to Peter: "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven."† It is plain from the New Testament, that Peter was in his day, the chief officer or presiding apostle, and revelator of the church. He in one sense of the word, was Christ's prime minister, and had authority to use the name and seal of his sovereign; or in other words, he had the keys of the kingdom, by which he could unlock the sacred treasury and receive knowledge immediately from Him, and thus be an organ of communication, to make known the word of God, to all the subjects of the kingdom. As he had a special commission from his sovereign, and a right to do business in his name; therefore, whatever he done under His sanction, was ratified in heaven. He also, was an envoy sent with a special message to the world. Christ said, at another time, to His apostles: "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said unto them, receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained."‡ I do not insert the above, to sustain the corruptions of Catholicism; but to show the true power of the priesthood. The apostles were the ministers of Christ, and

* 1 Th. i, 5. † Mat. xvi, 19. ‡ Jno. xx, 21—23

executive officers of His kingdom, and every official work they done, that pertained to their mission, was the work of God; and as He prescribed certain rules, precepts, and an ordinance, on condition of obedience to which, individuals have the promise of a remission of their sins; therefore, as they worked by these rules, and administered the ordinance, they by virtue of their mission, had a perfect right to say to the candidate, "your sins are remitted," and to the one who rejected the gospel, "your sins are retained." Indeed, the above scripture sets forth in glowing colors, the power of the priesthood that the apostles received. Paul writes thus: "In the name of the Lord Jesus, deliver such an one unto satan for the destruction of the flesh."* "Of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme."† These passages are so expressive of the power of the priesthood, that they need no comment whatever.

Again, the apostle says: "Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not."‡ "Wherefore, I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God."§ It is plain, the ministry, or dispensation here alluded to, is the holy priesthood. The everlasting covenant, so frequently alluded to in the scriptures, appears to be nothing more nor less, than the covenant of priesthood, or the one made, at the time a dispensation or the priesthood, is given to the people of God.

Nothing can be more plain upon this subject, than the following: "Ye also as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an *holy priesthood* to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."|| Could any thing be more sublime and exquisite, than this? The apostle compares the officers, and members of the church, to lively,

* 1 Co. v, 5. † 1 Ti. i, 20. ‡ 2. Co. iv. 1. § Col. i, 25. || 1 Pe. ii, 5.

that is, bright or lively appearing stones, that compose a building. Thus the church of Christ, being in possession of the holy priesthood, composed a spiritual house, or kingdom. Again, Peter says: "But ye are a chosen generation, a *royal priesthood*, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness, into His marvelous light."* Can it be possible, that an intelligent person, after reading the above, can doubt, that the holy priesthood after the order of Melchisedec, was introduced into the Christian church? The apostle, addressing himself to his brethren, says: "*ye are (of) a royal priesthood.*" They had been transplanted into the kingdom of God by the power of this priesthood, and thus experienced the benefits of it. They were adopted into the family of God, who is a King; hence, they were members of a royal family, of a "spiritual house" and of a "royal priesthood." Paul, speaking of Melchisedec, says: "He was made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually." The idea is, he had the same priesthood that Christ has. Melchisedec was a priest of the most High God, and king of Salem, and Christ is the King o. kings; therefore, this priesthood may be emphatically termed, the *royal or kingly priesthood*. Christ made this request of His Father, for His people: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me. And the glory which Thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one."† Christ is here made to say, that He had given His disciples the glory which the Father gave Him, that they might all be one with Him,

* 1 Pe. ii, 9

† Jno. xvii, 20-23.

or considered as members of one family. The glory alluded to, I presume, is in one sense of the word, the holy priesthood: for by the power of it, they were adopted into the family of God; and those who hold the office of it in time, if they are faithful to their sovereign, will take their place after the resurrection, and reign with Christ as kings and priests of God. But I am satisfied, that the foregoing is evidence, that is incontrovertible, and sufficient to convince every candid person, that the holy priesthood after the order Melchisedec, was given to the apostles, and other official members of the primitive church; therefore, I deem it unnecessary to say any thing more on this point, but shall now examine the organization of the kingdom of God, or church as it existed in this age.

Now reader, we often hear individuals say, they receive the New Testament or what is written in it, for their rule of faith, and guide to direct them in their religious exercises: and the majority of the Christian world, will say, if they are interrogated upon the subject, that the Church of Christ in all ages, should be organized strictly in accordance with the New Testament pattern; but you know, men sometimes say one thing and do another. And it is no uncommon thing to meet with men who are as conscientious as David was, when Nathan the prophet came to him, and mentioned the case of Uriah, and his wife, whom he compared to a poor man with one ewe lamb, which was taken away from him by some rich man. How often we hear men condemning others, for what they are guilty of themselves. But I condemn no man's opinions, any further than Christ, and the apostles condemn them. Indeed, my predilection is so great for the New Testament or primitive order of the church, and I am so conscientious about it, that I think no other order is as good, or will supercede the necessity of it: however, I do not think I am any more particular about this, than what the Lord is:

for it seems, that He has ever been pleased with His servants when they have done everything according to the rule or pattern He gave them ; but displeased when they disobeyed Him. He said to Moses : “ See that thou make all things according to the pattern shown thee in the mount.” Christ said to His disciples : “ Teach them to observe *all* things whatsoever I have commanded you.” If the apostles, under the immediate sanction of their Sovereign, at the opening of the Christian dispensation, organized the church as it should be, then their example should be followed as long as this dispensation continues,—and I am opposed to the idea of any man attempting, in the least, to improve the work of God.—But we will now see how the church was anciently organized.

Paul calls the church with all its gifts and officers, the spiritual body of Christ: he also compares it to a human body or system, that is perfect; hence, he says: “ For our comely parts have no need ; but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that part which lacked : that there should be no schism in the body ; but that the members should have the same care one for another.” “ Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church ; first, apostles ; secondarily, prophets ; thirdly, teachers ; after that miracles ; then gifts of healing, helps, governments and diversities of tongues.”* Now if God placed these officers in the church, and gave these gifts to His people, who has any authority to say, they are not necessary in the present day ? And the reader will remember, that the apostle addresses this rule, “ To the church of God at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours :”† Paul writes to the Ephesians as follows : “ Now therefore ye are no more strangers, and foreigners, but

* 1 Co. xii, 24—28. † 1 Co. i, 2.

fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God ; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone ; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord ; in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”* “ Wherefore He saith, when He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.” “ And he gave some apostles ; and some, prophets ; and some, evangelists ; and some, pastors and teachers : for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ : till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ : that we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive ; but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ : from whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”†

First, in the foregoing, the apostle compares the church to the perfect body of a man, and now we know, if one limb should be severed from the body of a man, there would be a schism in it, and if the head should be cut off, it will die : so it is with the church, if one of these officers is taken from it, then there is a schism in it ; and remember, “ God placed in the church ; first, apostles ; secondly, prophets &c.” Again, to take away from the church these Spiritual gifts, mentioned by the apostle, would be the same, as to take from a man the senses of seeing, hearing, feeling, &c. Secondly, he com-

* Ep. ii, 19—22. † Ep. iv, 8, 11—16.

pare the church, with all these officers and gifts, to a perfect building: for says he: "Ye are built upon the foundation of apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief corner stone; in whom the building is fitly framed together." "From whom the whole body is joined together that every joint supplieth its place." Thus, Christ, the apostles, and prophets, were the chief officers of the primitive church;—but I will be more particular. As there is, in a political kingdom, a regular grade of officers from the king down to the one of the most inferior rank; so it is with the kingdom of God. And it is evident, that Peter, James and John, were the chief or presiding apostles of the church; but the Lord gave to Peter the keys of the kingdom; therefore, he was chief of the three; hence, on earth, the head or president of the church. Paul, speaking of his being at Jerusalem, says: "And when James, Cephas, [or Peter] and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they give to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship."* This sets forth the eminent station in the church, in which these three apostles were placed. Some are of opinion, they were ordained to this office, at the time Christ took them up on the mountain, and was transfigured, and Moses and Elias, appeared with Him. The idea is, that Moses and Elias, had the keys of the kingdom in their day; but Christ stands at the head of all; therefore, these great High-priests formed a quorum to ordain these men to the office which they held. In short, the offices of the church, were as follows: First, Christ, who is the head of all things pertaining to the kingdom on earth; Secondly, these three apostles above mentioned, who governed the church under the immediate supervision of Christ; Thirdly, all the apostles; then the elders, bishops, priests or pastors, teachers, and deacons. All these were the different grades of officers in the church, or

* Ga. ii, 9.

different offices of this grand system of priesthood.—But now, a word about the Aaronic, or lower order of priesthood.

I observed in the preceding chapter, that the Aaronic priesthood was not a new institution; but is of equal antiquity with the Melchisedec, and that as soon as the law was given, it was given to Aaron and his sons, to be appropriated for the administration of the law, as long as it should continue. Now the reader will remember, that any one who holds the office of the Melchisedec priesthood has a perfect right to ordain individuals to, and officiate in all the inferior ranks of offices: this is evident from the fact, that Moses both ordained Aaron and officiated in the same capacity that he did, when the occasion required it; therefore, as soon as Christ came, and the law ceased to be in force, this order of priesthood resumed its place in the kingdom of God, or was used for the same purpose, with the exception of offering sacrifices upon the altar, that it was before the law was given. The idea, that one officer in the church, has more authority than another, is established from the account of Philip, one of the seven that was ordained by the apostles, who preached the gospel, and baptized a great number of persons in Samaria; but had not the authority to confirm them by the imposition of hands; therefore, the apostles, Peter and John, were sent for, to do it.* Philip probably, only held the office of the Aaronic priesthood.

It is unnecessary to say any thing about the mode of ordination, or consecration: for it is plainly set forth in the scriptures; and the following will suffice for the mode of calling men to the ministry: “Now there were in the church that was at Antioch, certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and

* See Ac. viii.

fasted, the Holy Ghost said, separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.”* Having said so much about the kingdom of God, and the manner in which it was established, I deem it necessary, in order to do justice to the subject, to say something about the precepts of the gospel, and the proper mode of entering into this kingdom.

As I before mentioned, Christ came to establish His kingdom on earth, and as the sacred writers give Him the character of a wise and good Captain; more than this, an affectionate King, that went before His people, and showed them the way; therefore, in order for us to understand how we are to enter this kingdom, it is necessary for us to find out what the example of Christ was, and then to follow it. “When Jesus began to be about thirty years of age,” He came to John the Baptist and demanded His right to be baptized: but John having a profound reverence for his Lord, refused at first, saying, “I have more need to be baptized of thee.” “Jesus answering said unto him, suffer it to be so now for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when He was baptized went up straight-way out of the water and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: and, lo, a voice from heaven, saying this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.”† Christ knew that baptism is the initiatory ordinance of His kingdom; therefore, He marked the way or set an example of obedience, that He could say with propriety to all the world, “take up your cross and follow me;” also by being baptized, He obeyed or fulfilled the law of righteousness, which is the gospel. There is, however, one more fact, connected with the baptism of Christ, that deserves our

* Ac. xiii, 1—3.

† Mat. iii. 15—17.

particular attention. Christ was virtually the Son of God, before He was baptized; but the acknowledgment of His Sonship from heaven by the vocal voice of the Father, was reserved till after He had submitted to this ordinance, it seems, in order to give a clear and lucid idea of the mode of entering the kingdom of God, and of our reception of the Holy Spirit, which seals our heirship with the family of God. As soon as Christ was baptized, He commenced proclaiming His gospel, and saying: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." "And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." I do not suppose Christ intended to convey the idea, that all His followers are to follow His footsteps in Palestine, and be crucified as He was; but that all are required to obey the law of righteousness, according to His example; and as He was buried in the liquid grave, so must all those be, who take up their cross and follow Him. After His resurrection, He commanded His disciples to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every person, and remarked: "He that believeth, and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned, and these signs shall follow them that believe," &c. But in order to understand the object of baptism, it is necessary for us to acquaint ourselves with the condition of the world, with regard to their relationship with God. I have before mentioned, that mankind before obedience to the gospel, are aliens, or strangers to God. Paul says: "For God hath concluded them all (both Jews and Gentiles,) in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all."* "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God."† The gospel takes for granted, that all the world, inasmuch as all have sinned, are in this condition; and it is the word of reconciliation: and baptism, is one of

* Ro. xi, 32.

† Ep. ii, 19.

the precepts of this gospel, by which foreigners are adopted into the family of God ; hence, Christ said : “ Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.”* Faith in God, and a sincere repentance, are prerequisite to baptism in all cases. Christ, after He had sufficiently instructed His disciples, and given them a strict charge to go into all the world and preach the gospel, told them to tarry at Jerusalem until they were endowed with power from on high. This was accomplished on the day of Pentecost, at which time the Holy Ghost came with the sound of a mighty rushing wind, and filled the whole house where they were sitting. After this, Peter who had the keys of the kingdom, arose and preached what is generally termed the first gospel sermon, that was delivered after the resurrection of Christ. And under consideration, that the instruction of Christ was fresh on his memory, whatever he taught as being the gospel, is most certainly the gospel at the present time. He preached Christ and Him crucified, rehearsed some of the predictions of the prophets, and testified to His glorious resurrection. When those who were present heard this, they were pricked in their hearts, and inquired what they should do to be saved, or to use their own words : “ Men and brethren what shall we do ? ” The reader will remember, these persons were not Christians before this ; for conviction had that moment fastened itself upon their minds, but they were penitents, who had just placed themselves in the attitude of inquirers after the truth, or what they should do to be saved. And whatever this noted apostle told them they should do to be saved, the same all mankind must do, in order to inherit the same blessing. The apostle did not require them to remain on probation a length of time, or to bow to a mourner’s bench, or come forward to an altar, and thus enter the kingdom of God, and become entitled to the promised bless-

* Mat. xxviii, 19.

ings of the gospel of peace ; but he simply commanded them as follows : “ Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins ; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost : for the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord our God shall call.”* From this we learn, that baptism is for the remission of sins, and to repent and be baptized for this, is precisely what Peter on the day of Pentecost, told penitents to do in order to be saved ; and I take his words, or testimony on this subject, in preference to that of the battalion of modern divines, who assert to the contrary. Indeed, I am so peculiarly attached to the New Testament doctrine, that I am willing to hazard my soul’s salvation upon a profession of the faith and doctrine that it sets forth, which was instituted by Christ, and propagated by His disciples, at the expense of all the opposite doctrines and notions, which are the work of human ingenuity. Therefore, I contend the ordinance of baptism should be administered for the remission of sins : not that there is any power in the water to remit sins ; but the Lord commands all to be baptized, and on condition of obedience, He promises to remit their sins. The prophet, speaking to a certain people, says : “ Your sins have separated you from your God.” Indeed, it is the sin of a man, and the entailment of the curse, that renders him a foreigner from God. Sin is the transgression of the law ; but infants and those who know no law, will be redeemed by Christ from the consequences of the original sin, and brought nigh to God ; but as soon as an individual arrives to the age from whence he is accountable to God for his conduct, and hears the gospel, an obedience to it is obligatory upon him ; hence, the precepts of the gospel are for those that are of a mature age, who are capable of exercising faith, and repenting of their sins. Christ said

* Ac ii, 38, 39.

“Except a man be born of the water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter unto the kingdom of God.”* To be born, is to pass from one state to another; hence, to be born of the water, is to be regenerated and pass from our alienable state into the family or kingdom of God. The apostle Paul, illustrates this in a most beautiful manner by the following comparison: “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”† Now when Christ was crucified, His body was a mortal one, and as such, it was laid in the tomb; but when it was resurrected and came forth, it was immortal; therefore, His state was changed from one world to another, and His body from mortality to immortality. The apostle uses this as a figure, to illustrate the utility of baptism, the candidate for which, he represents as being a foreigner from God, and in a sinful state; but the administrator takes him and buries him in the liquid grave, he then becomes dead unto sin; but as Christ was raised by the glory of the Father, so he is raised to newness of life. Thus baptism is the ordinance of adoption, or to be baptized is perfectly passive, and is, to be taken from our sinful state, and be inducted into the glorious liberty of the kingdom of God; or to use the apostles words, which are very appropriate:—“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.”‡ Nothing can be more plain than the following: “In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ;

* Jno. iii, 5. † Ro. vi, 3, 4. ‡ Col. i, 12, 13.

buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.”*

The disciples of Christ introduced the doctrine of baptism, in every place where they preached the gospel, and individuals made application for admittance into the church: for instance, Peter on the day of Pentecost; Philip to the Samaritans, and to the Ethiopian of Candace; Annanias to Paul, to whom he said: “Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins calling on the name of the Lord;” Paul to the Jailer and his household, who were baptized the same hour that he was convinced of the truth of the gospel, to Lydia and her household, who were baptized as soon as they heard one sermon, to the twelve disciples of John at Ephesus, and to the Corinthians. The circumstance of Cornelius and his household, receiving the gospel deserves our particular attention. He was a pious man, and one who feared God, and an angel appeared to him, who told him to send for Peter, who would tell him what to do to be saved. Now, notwithstanding all of Cornelius’ piety and prayers, he was not yet in a state of salvation, or within the kingdom of God: for if he had been, the angel would not have told him that Peter had such a message for him; but the question is, what did Cornelius lack, or what was there for him to do that he had not done? I reply, he had not yet taken up his cross, and followed Christ in the work of the regeneration, or been baptized into the kingdom of God. The message Peter had was this: “While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. Then answered Peter, can any man forbid water, that these should be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

* Col. ii, 11—13.

And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord."* From the above, we learn the utility of baptism, and that a man may be as pious as Cornelius was, to pray often and give alms to the poor, yet he cannot enter the kingdom of God without being baptized. Christ set the example, opened the way, and said to all, take up your cross and follow me; and also, that "except a man be born of the water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." It is a common thing for people in this our day, to contend that God is so merciful He will save good and pious men if they are not baptized. All I have to say to this, is that if He does, He has changed His mind: for the previous account of Cornelius, shows that baptism is obligatory upon all. Indeed, the gospel guarantees salvation to mankind, on no other condition than obedience to all its precepts.

Peter on the day of Pentecost, promised the gift of the Holy Ghost on condition of repentance and baptism for the remission of sins; but it appears, this gift was received by the imposition of hands. The following are examples of the performance of this ordinance. As soon as Philip had baptized the Samaritans, Peter and John, were sent for,—"Who when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost, for as yet he was fallen upon none of them; only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid they their hands on them and they received the Holy Ghost."† Paul after he had baptized the twelve disciples of John, whom he found at Ephesus, laid his hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost, and spake with tongues and prophesied.‡ It is evident, this is an institution of the gospel from the fact the Lord sanctioned it by giving the Holy Spirit to those whom the apostles administered to; therefore, the same should be practiced by Christians of the present age: "For though we or an angel

* Ac. x, 44—47. † Ac. viii, 15—17. ‡ Ac. xix ch.

from heaven," says Paul, "preach any other gospel unto you than that we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."* 'This is the ordinance of confirmation, by which those who were baptized, were confirmed members of the kingdom of God. Thus the Holy priesthood, in one sense of the word, was the authority given to the primitive saints, by which they were saved: the apostles, and other officers, received a sufficient degree of it to administer the ordinances, through which all were adopted into the family of God, and, therefore, all received the benefits of it, and were prepared to receive the Holy Ghost, which sealed their heirship; hence, Paul says: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again, to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry abba Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ."† John speaking of Christ, says: "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."‡ The power that He gave them was the priesthood, and also the Holy Ghost, which was received by the imposition of the hands of those who had this authority. Paul also says: "That as many as were baptized into Christ, (that is into His kingdom,) put on Christ, and become Abraham's children and heirs according to the promise." He further says: "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, abba, Father.

* Ga. i, 8, 9. † Ro. viii, 14—17. ‡ Jno. i, 11—13.

Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.”* The apostles, in their writings, frequently call the saints, the “sons and daughters of God.”

The particular blessings or gifts of the Spirit, that the ancient saints received, were the gifts of prophecy or revelation, administration of angels, faith, healing of the sick, &c., &c.; these were the characteristics of that people, and Christ said, these signs shall follow the believer in all the world, and there is no evidence in the New Testament, that they were ever to be taken from the saints, unless they apostatized, and rendered themselves unworthy of them. And it will be remembered, these gifts were given to individuals, who had the priesthood, and those who by the power of it had been adopted into the kingdom of God; but as soon as the priesthood was corrupted, individuals were not legally adopted into this kingdom; therefore, these gifts were not given. Indeed, no one has authority to administer any of these ordinances, unless he has the priesthood. This idea deserves our particular attention; for it brings to the test all the authority of the Christian world.

One thing is certain, the Lord positively forbade any one of the Israelites to officiate at the altar to administer ordinances, unless he held the office of the priesthood; and I have positively proved, that the apostles, and others of the primitive church, received the office of it; therefore, I reason by analogy, and infer, that no one in the Christian dispensation, has a right to administer ordinances without this delegation of authority from God. The apostle says: “No man taketh this honour unto himself; but he that is called of God as was Aaron.”† Aaron was called by revelation, and consecrated to the office of the priesthood by Moses. And as, is before mentioned, Saul king of Israel,

* Ga. iv, 6, 7. † He. v, 4.

was cursed for violating this rule. The Lord gave Peter, James, John and Paul, a commission ; but that is no sign I have one, or any other person of the nineteenth century. Every person's commission answers for himself, and no other one ; but says one, if a man is a good Christian, and should baptize a person in the name of Christ without being authorized by this priesthood, would not his administration be valid? I answer in the negative ; but will illustrate my idea by a comparison : for instance, an individual assumes a commission to administer the oath of allegiance, or to naturalize a foreigner, that he may be recognized as a citizen of the United States : an alien comes to him, and applies for citizenship, he uses the legal ceremony, and administers the oath to the applicant, and certifies to it ; but the man is virtually a foreigner still, and yet there was no defect in the form and ceremony ; but the defect is in the authority of the administrator ; hence, the man is not entitled to all the privileges of an American citizen, because, in the eyes of the law, he is not recognized as a citizen : so it is with regard to the kingdom of God, if an individual has not the priesthood, he may baptize a man a thousand times, and do it in the name of Christ, and with the specified ceremony and mode, yet he will not be recognized as a citizen of the kingdom of God ; hence, he will not receive those gifts of the Spirit, that a legal citizen is entitled to. In this way, I account for the cessation of those signs and gifts, that the primitive saints enjoyed. The Melchisedec, and Aaronic, are the only priesthoods that God ever has acknowledged ; therefore, if the Christian world have neither of them, it is solemn mockery for them to administer the ordinances of the kingdom of God : for they have no authority to do it.

Now reader, I have proved beyond successful contradiction, that the holy priesthood was given to the apostles, and other officers of the primitive Church : I have also in a brief man-

ner set forth the ancient order of it. And now the rule that Christ, and the apostles worked by, was a perfect one; therefore, the order of the kingdom was perfect, and its perfection consisted in its being precisely what it was and nothing else. But there are many, who contend that the organization of the church once in the manner I have before mentioned, was sufficient, and therefore, we need no succession of apostles, prophets, &c.: they also say, there was, and is no need of a continuation of this priesthood in the church. I reply, that I might as well say, Melchisedec, and Abraham, were great high-priests; hence, it was superfluous for Jethro, and Moses, to hold the same office some four or five hundred years after their day; or that Aaron was a priest at the commencement of the Mosaic dispensation; therefore, there was no necessity for a successor to hold the same office. Furthermore, to reason by analogy,—as that dispensation is generally allowed to be a type of the Christian, and as during the former, it was necessary there should be a succession of priests, as long as it lasted: so it is with the latter, it was and is necessary, there should be a regular succession of men, holding the same offices that Christ instituted, to the end of it, if there will be an end. Paul says, apostles, prophets &c., were set in the church, for the work of the ministry, and the perfecting of the saints; and to keep them from being carried away by delusive doctrines: and every person knows that such officers have been necessary ever since the commencement of the Christian dispensation. But once more upon the high station of the apostles. Christ said to them: “I am the Vine and ye are the branches, and ye shall ask the Father whatsoever you will in my name, and it shall be given to you.” “Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I

have made known unto you.”* At another time, He intimated that many things were hid from the wise and great men ; but that they were revealed unto His disciples. Thus the apostles were, in one sense of the word, members of the cabinet of Christ : He called them His friends and made known to them the great things of His kingdom, and through them He communicated His will to the world. It was their privilege to know the mind of God concerning the affairs of the church. And what makes this matter a subject of the most thrilling interest, is the fact that all those who have received this priesthood, will arise in the morning of the resurrection, and commence their reign with Christ, as kings and priests.

One idea more, I wish to forcibly impress upon the minds of all those into whose hands this work shall fall, and then I will close this chapter, and that is, the scriptural fact, that from the beginning of the world to the close of the first century at least, God never had a people or church that He acknowledged to be His own without having in it, prophets, and inspired men ; and there is nothing in the bible to prove that He ever will acknowledge a church to be His, without having such men in it.

* Jno. xv ch.

CHAPTER V.

Prophetic Account of the Apostacy from the Primitive Order of the Church—Rise of the “Man of Sin,” or “Mystery Babylon the Great”—The Protestant Societies are destitute of the Priesthood—And History of the Same, from the Commencement of the Christian Era to the Present Time.

IN the preceding chapter, I demonstrated the fact, that the holy priesthood was given to the apostles, and others of the Primitive or New Testament church; and also, in a brief manner, set forth its proper order; but in this, I shall bring to the test, the authority of the whole Christian world. However, before I proceed with my history, I will illustrate by comparison the necessity of a continuation of this order of the kingdom, as long as the Christian dispensation is perpetuated.

Many of the theological writers of modern times, assert that one set of apostles and prophets, was sufficient for the church in all ages; that is, the apostles, prophets, &c., that Christ placed in the church, were all that ever was or is necessary, and that their writings abundantly supply their place; hence, that the writings of Peter, James, John, Paul and others, which compose the New Testament, supercede the necessity of successors to them holding the same offices. This is certainly one of the most preposterous ideas ever imbibed by human beings: for instance reader, what would

you think of a set of men, if they should contend, that at the commencement of the independence of the United States, we had a number of illustrious statesmen, who held the offices in the various departments of the government; but because we have their writings or productions, which are read with much interest, there is no necessity for successors to them? A strange government indeed, we should have with nothing but a set of old letters and books to administer the laws, and preserve the tranquility of the nation. The matter stands thus, apostles, prophets and other ecclesiastics, were placed in the church for the work of ministry, or to negotiate with the world in the name of Christ, and adopt souls into His kingdom; but they, and all those who were cotemporary with them, deceased, and another generation came upon the stage of action with equal claims upon the interposition of divine Providence in their behalf, and to all the rights and privileges of this kingdom; hence, it was just as necessary that apostles, &c., should be in the church in their day, as in that of those who went before them.

The idea, that the writings of the apostles supercede the necessity of such ministers in the church at the present day, and that they are all the commission necessary for those who preach the gospel, has thrown the world into confusion, and caused societies to spring up like mushrooms, in all parts of the world, for it at once throws the priesthood out of the question, and lets loose the reins of government, and gives every man, that has the New Testament, licence to establish a society. Indeed, if the above notion is correct, then every man that has this book, has a commission to preach the gospel, and build up the kingdom of God, and every society that has it, are in possession of that which is paramount with apostles, and prophets.

Again, there is just as much scripture and reason, for dismissing the offices of the bishop, elder or presbyter, teacher,

and deacon, as there is for the apostles, and prophets; and every intelligent person knows there is none for either.—But I must hasten.

The principal object I have in view at present, is the apostacy or falling away, from the before mentioned order of the kingdom of God, which I have set forth in plain terms. How long this order continued after the death of the apostles, is uncertain. But it is evident from some of their declarations, that the apostacy commenced in their day. Indeed, I infer from many predictions of the prophets, and apostles, which I shall notice hereafter, that their most sanguine expectations were, that there would be a general apostacy from the true order of the church, and had they have remained on earth, they would have witnessed what they anticipated. I regret, that I have not sufficient room in this work, without crowding out other matter of more importance, to introduce a conclusive history of the church, from the apostles down to the consummation of this apostacy; but however, this is a matter of notoriety: for scores of eminent historians, have set it forth in a plain and legible manner; therefore, I shall chiefly confine myself to the prophetic history of this awful affair. It is probable the apostles ordained efficient men to succeed them, that the work of the ministry might be performed; but how long their successors continued to hold fellowship with God, is uncertain. But I will now call the attention of the reader to the scriptures.

Paul says, in his epistle to the Romans, (which may be with propriety applied to all the Gentiles:) “Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God; on them which fell severity; but towards thee, goodness; if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.”* From this we learn, that God promised to continue His goodness or blessing with the Gentiles on condition of faithfulness to

* Ro. xi, 22.

Him; otherwise they should be cut off: cut off from what? I answer, the power, and privileges of the kingdom of God: for the apostle is here reasoning to show that the Jews were cut off or excluded from these blessings of the kingdom, because of their unbelief; and for this reason, they were transferred to the Gentiles; hence, the force of his argument is, that if the Gentiles should not continue in the goodness of God, they should be cut off, or excluded the same as the Jews were; and it is a fact, abundantly demonstrated in all the most approved histories of the church, that they have not continued in this goodness.

The following is positive "Now we beseech you brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means; *for that day shall not come except there come a falling away first*, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."* I regard the foregoing as a positive prediction, that in the elapse of time from the days of the apostles or the first century, to the second advent of Christ, there was to be an apostacy, or falling away from the primitive order of the church. The apostle calls the apostacy of the Jews, and their unbelief, for which the kingdom was taken from them, a falling away; or in other words, "their fall:" so we must understand the above to be a prediction of the apostacy of the Christian church, and the corruption of the holy priesthood, so that it should be taken from its officers, or loose its efficacy. Indeed, if this prophecy of the apostle is true, then we must look for an apostacy at some future

period from his day. He thus intimates, that it commenced in his time: "The mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth [hindreth,] will let until he be taken out of the way." The "*man of sin*" or "*son of perdition*" is synonymous with "*anti-christ*," which is generally explained as being an allusion to the popish hierarchy.

Paul said to the elders of the church at Ephesus: "For know this, that after my departing shall greivous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock; also of your own-selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."* I presume no person after reading the above, will dispute that the most sanguine expectation of the apostle, was that there would be a great departure from the true order of the church at some period after his day.

John the Revelator is exceedingly plain upon this subject. In the iv. chap. of his "*Revelation*," he says: "I heard a voice which said, come up hither, and I will show you things which must be hereafter;" therefore, as the prophetic vision rolled before his mind, many things that were to be transacted in the future, were represented to him by various symbolical forms or figures. In the twelfth chapter of this book, he says: "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon was under her feet; and upon her head was a crown of twelve stars:"

It is admitted by nearly all the men of the *literati*, that this woman symbolically represents the church in its pure state, crowned with all its gifts and blessings, and at its head twelve apostles or great high priests. Indeed, in other parts of the Apocalypsc, the pure church of Christ is evidently portrayed by a woman: In chap. xix, ver. 7, a great multitude are represented as saying: "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His *wife* hath made herself ready." In chap.

*Ac. xx, 29, 30.

xxi, ver. 9, the angel says to John : " Come up hither, and I will show thee the *bride* the Lamb's *wife*."

" And she being with child cried, travailling in birth, and pained to be delivered." In the succeeding verses, he speaks of the " Dragon" otherwise *satan*, who in the course of time, became so intimately connected or incorporated with the Roman power, that he is represented as having seven heads, and ten horns, as the beast that represents that empire is said to have ; that is, he pressed the power of Rome, and the kings that arose in its dominions, into his cause, or wielded it, to effect his purpose, which was to persecute, and oppress the woman, and increase her pangs. " And she brought forth a man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron ; and her child was caught up unto God, and His throne." Now this man-child is not Christ ; for this reason, the birth of the former, is represented as having taken place sometime after the resurrection of the latter. Again, the woman is a figure ; hence, the child cannot be a literal one ; but a symbolical representation of something that pertains to the church. But after a careful investigation of the relative bearings of this most exquisite symbol, I have come to the conclusion, that the " man-child " stands for the holy priesthood, which was taken from the church, in consequence of wickedness. Furthermore, the priesthood is the power that is given to Christ, by which He will yet rule the nations ; it is also, the power that was given to the apostles, and other servants of God, by which in the Millennium, they will reign as kings and priests, with Christ ; hence, it is the power by which the nations will be ruled.—But to be more particular.

First, the woman or church, is described as having on her head a crown of twelve stars, and as being magnificently adorned ; that is, with the gifts and graces of the gospel ; secondly, as being " with child," and in pain and anguish to be delivered, and the dragon or *satan* with all his forces op-

posing or oppressing her, and as the time draws near, as is not uncommon, she becomes careless and indifferent about her bridal ornaments;—therefore, they are torn from her, and thus she is stripped of all her original decorations, and made ready for the consummation of her parturition; the child is born, and immediately taken from her. To speak plain, the church was at first adorned with all the spiritual gifts, that I have before mentioned, the holy priesthood was given to the apostles, prophets, and others, who were the officers of the same. The apostles, and all the true followers of Christ, were distressed when they beheld the corruption of the priesthood, the innovations into the church, and its destined fate. Alas! it became so corrupt, that God took the priesthood from it; hence, the authority to administer the ordinances of the kingdom, was left with no one.

“And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and three score days.” As soon as the priesthood was taken from the church, the original organization was broken up, and then it went into the wilderness; or in other words, it was involved in darkness and confusion, the gift of prophecy and its protecting powers, were taken away or were rejected by the majority of the members of the church; therefore, they were left to be carried about by every wind of doctrine, and to be led captive at the will of satan. Yet I believe the Lord has had many witnesses of His goodness in all ages, and many honest persons, perhaps in all societies, who have lived in accordance with the light and intelligence they received, and who have been nourished or sustained by the Lord; although figuratively speaking, they were in the wilderness. Under these circumstances, the woman has been sustained, one thousand two hundred and threescore days. This is generally understood to mean twelve hundred and sixty years; but there is

no way of finding out the exact time when the priesthood was taken from the church; however, it is evident, it took place about the time the popish hierarchy supplanted the primitive order of it. Some contend that it took place in the reign of the emperor Justinian, who issued edicts for the promotion of pope Vigilius, and the augmentation of his power, which occurred about the middle of the Sixth century; others, that it happened in the latter part of this century or at the commencement of the Seventh. However, be this as it may, it is abundantly evident, the true church was to remain in the wilderness, at least, till the Nineteenth century. Having disposed of the woman that represents the true church of Christ, we will now take a view of another one of a different character.

John in the seventeenth chapter of his "Revelation," says, one of the seven angels came unto him, and promised to show him the woman with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication. "So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication. And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her I wondered with great admiration."

Now as the former woman is an emblem of a church, so must this one be, and indeed, nothing can be more plain than that this latter one, is an emblematical representation of the Roman or Latin church. I have before explained the man-

ner in which the true church went into the wilderness ; and mark, the angel takes the apostle into this wilderness to see this "mother of harlots." Or in other words, where the first in a manner, vanishes out of sight, the second is discovered to the apostle ; or as the Babylonian empire, was supplanted by the Medo-Persian, and as the power of the latter was placed in the realms of the former, so the Latin hierarchy supplanted the Christian church, and arose upon the ruins of it. It is evident, that the beast upon which this woman was seen, is Political Rome, with all its apartments and divisions ; but it is needless for me to be particular upon this point ; for many eminent historians, whose writings are accessible to all, have given a full account of this whole affair. One thing is certain, the Roman church has frequently called to her assistance the kings of the earth, or of the Latin power.— But to be brief. First, she is named "*mystery*," and as Bishop Newton observes, "the Latin church is a complete *mystery of iniquity*;" secondly, she is called "Babylon the Great:" she is the exact antitype of ancient Babylon in her haughtiness, idolatry, and cruelty ; Thirdly, "the mother of harlots." &c. There are scores of societies that are the immediate offspring of the Catholic church, and they have inherited the same spirit of pride, and arrogance, and the same practice of making merchandise of the gospel that she has ever manifested. Thus she is indeed the "mother of Harlots" and Abominations of the earth, and she and her offspring, compose a complete "Mystery," "Babylon," or mass of confusion. And certainly the reader, after reading the foregoing, will not censure me for saying that there has been a great apostacy, or falling away from the ancient order of the church.

I now call the attention of the reader to what is recorded in the Seventh chapter of Daniel. First, the four universal empires of the world, are represented by four beasts of dif-

ferent species ; and no one disputes but what the fourth one, which has ten horns, is a symbolical representation of the Roman power or empire : for it is a fact, that at the fall of this empire, ten inferior kingdoms arose upon its ruins, and within the bounds of its dominions, which are the ten horns of the beast. “ And there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots ; and behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things.” There is no room left for doubt, that this little horn, is the kingdom of Popes : for it was set up about the time, or soon after the fall of the ancient Roman empire. The Popes in time called several kings to their assistance, and at least, subdued three of these ten horns or kingdoms, and ceded their dominions to the church. Bishop Newton is of opinion that the three that were plucked up, were the Exarchate of Ravenna, the kingdom of the Lombards, and the senate and dukedom of Rome. As soon as the see of Rome, subdued these kingdoms, the pope was raised to the rank of a temporal prince. “ I beheld,” says Daniel, “ the same [little] horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them.” Indeed, the Roman hierarchy persecuted unto death and harrassed those who would not receive her doctrines, and enormities ; and this corresponds with what John says : “ And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and the martyrs of Jesus.”

“ And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws ; and they shall be given into his hand until a *time and times and the dividing of time.*” Every person who is acquainted with the history of the popes, and those immediately connected with them, knows that this is an exact description of their works ; for they have oppressed and worn out the honest followers of Christ,

blasphemed against God by assuming high titles, which only belong to God, and have changed, not only the laws and order of the kingdom of God, but those of nations. The "*times*" mentioned here, are explained the same as the twelve hundred and sixty days. John corroborates the above, as will be seen from the whole of the thirteenth chap. of his Apocalypse, which the reader will do well to carefully examine.

Now I trust that in the foregoing, I have made it sufficiently plain, that the "man of sin" or the popish hierarchy, was to and actually has, supplanted the true church, and overcome the saints or worn them out; and also, that the power of the priesthood has been taken from the earth.

The following is referred to, as evidence to countermand this idea: "And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter; and upon this rock will I build my church; and the gates of hell (*or hades*) shall not prevail against it."* Now it makes no difference, so far as our subject is concerned, whither this rock is Christ, Peter, or a revelation direct from God to His people; the only idea it conveys to the mind of an impartial and intelligent person, is that the gates of hades will not prevail, or as it should be, *inclose*; that is, to shut up in hell, the members of the church, if they are built upon the rock, and continue thereupon. An apostate church, and a wicked nation, may prevail and triumph over their cotemporaries: but in another world, the powers and gates of hell will inclose them; but it is not so with the members of the church that are built upon the rock, their enemies may prevail against their bodies; but they never can thrust their souls into hell. The above promise reaches to those who are built upon the rock, and not those, who comparatively speaking, are built upon a sandy foundation. The foregoing quotation is synonymous with this: "I am the Vine and ye are the branches: he that

* Mat, xvi, 18.

abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.”* When the members of the church, are faithful to God, they abide in Christ, and compose His church that is built upon the true rock ; but if they abide not in Him, then they are not His church ; but one built upon some other foundation, and of course are not under the immediate protection of God. The instruction that Christ gave in His sermon on the mount, is the same in amount as the above.†

Again, says one, did not Christ promise His disciples that He would be with them even unto the end of the world ? I reply, He is always with His people when they “ abide in the Vine ;” but when they forsake Him, He is under no obligation to ramble after them, in order to protect them. Another passage that is referred to, to sustain the idea that there was to be no general apostacy, is what Daniel says in his interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream ; but for an explanation of this, I refer the reader to the succeeding chapter.

The following is conclusive evidence to sustain the position that I have taken : “ The earth mourneth, and fadeth away : the haughty people of the earth do languish. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, and broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate : therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left.”‡ It will be seen from the context, that the earth is to be turned upside down, and that priests and people, master and servant, mistress and maid, buyer and seller, and borrower and lender, are all to share alike in an awful destruction or conflagration ; and also, that the earth is to reel to

* Jno. xv, 5, 6.

† See Mat. vii. ch.

‡ Is. xxiv, 4—6.

and fro like a drunken man, cities are to be thrown down, and that God shall destroy the great and mighty men of the earth so that but few will be left. And the prophet assigns, "the transgression of the law, changing of the ordinance, and breaking of the everlasting covenant," as the reason or cause for all this. And no man that retains his sober senses, will pretend to say, that this universal destruction has yet been consummated: for according to the prophet, it is to immediately precede the reign of Christ on earth, with His saints: "Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously." Indeed, was there, ever a time when all but a few of the inhabitants of the earth, were burnt up, as is here described by the prophet? Certainly, every sensible person will respond in the negative.

Now I opine that the foregoing is sufficient to convince every candid individual, that this prediction relates to something after the commencement of the Christian dispensation; therefore, I will examine it specifically. First, "Because they have transgressed the Laws:" this certainly alludes to a set of insubordinate apostates: and it can be established beyond doubt, that the Lord instituted a code of laws for the government of His kingdom, and that these laws particularly direct that the kingdom should be organized in the manner set forth in the preceding part of this work. As long as the members of the church adhered to these laws, they constituted the church of Christ; but as soon as they changed them, and substituted new precepts, and officers, they ceased to be His true church. The apostle says: "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law." This rule will certainly work both ways; therefore, if there is a change of law, there must be a change of priesthood, and it is established beyond successful contradiction,

that the leaders of the church in times past, transgressed the laws or changed them : and as the priesthood is only adapted to the kingdom of God, or to those precepts instituted by Christ and no other ; therefore, when the laws were changed, and a new order of things instituted and adopted, it was necessary that an executive, and legislative power should be created, that was adapted to the new form of government. And indeed, so it was, the Catholic hierarchy changed the laws of the church, and for apostles, prophets, &c., they substituted popes, legates, cardinals, canons, prebendaries, &c., hence, they have a priesthood, and set of officers, that are adapted to that order, and not to the kingdom of God, no more so, than the legislative, and executive officers of China, are adapted to the laws, and institutions of the United States.

Secondly, they have “ changed the ordinance.” This certainly alludes to the ordinance of baptism : for it is demonstrated in the scriptures, and by many learned historians, that immersion was the only mode of baptism practiced in the first two or three centuries ; but when the apostates changed many other institutions of the church, baptism shared the same fate. The change has been from immersion to that of sprinkling or the pouring on of water. Mr. Gahan, a Catholic historian, says that immersion was the usual mode down to the middle of the Third century. Dr. Mosheim also says, it was administered by immersion in these early times. The testimony of these men is of undoubted authority, and probably would not have been given, could they have honourably avoided it : for in doing it, they have condemned themselves, both having adopted another mode.

The change of this ordinance alone, in time, destroyed all legal authority to administer any ordinance of the kingdom ; for I have already proved that baptism is the ordinance of adoption ; therefore, if none are lawfully baptized, none are

legal citizens of the kingdom ; and it is unconstitutional for individuals to hold the priesthood, or an office in the church, who are not citizens of it.

Thirdly, "They have broken the everlasting covenant." Now I am fully satisfied that this everlasting covenant, is the covenant of priesthood : and I trust, that what I have before said about the covenant of priesthood has convinced the reader of this fact. As soon as the laws and ordinances were changed, the stipulations of this covenant were infringed upon, and of course, the agreement broken. Can any one read the history of the church, and compare this prediction of the prophet with it, without being satisfied that it was in a great measure fulfilled in the setting up of the "*man of sin*," or the popish hierarchy ? Again, just in proportion as the Protestant societies support the Mother Church in her works of apostacy, and supplanting primitive institutions of the kingdom, they are guilty of the crime alleged by the prophet ; hence, when the day of punishment comes, they must share in it.

The principal object in view, at the onset of the foregoing investigation, was the first general apostacy ; therefore, reader I sincerely request you to carefully compare the prophecies that I have inserted and the comment upon them, with the most authentic histories of the church, and when you are thus prepared to judge, I am confident your verdict will coincide with mine, which is, that the holy priesthood was taken from the church, which immediately went or fled into the wilderness ; and that the Romish church, which is represented by the "woman that set upon the scarlet coloured beast," supplanted the true church of God. Indeed, the arrogance and assumption of the popes, the sale of indulgences, amalgamation of numerous pagan rites and ceremonies with those of the church, the worship of images, the celibacy of the clergy, monkery in all its horrid forms, the flagitious

court of inquisition, exorcism, the nunnery system, and scores of other equally absurd notions and practices, all rush into the mind as demonstrative evidence of the truth of what I have before mentioned. Certainly, no one can be so unreasonable as to suppose, that the priesthood has been retained pure by a people that have been guilty of these enormities. I set it down as a fact, which I conceive to be incontrovertible, that although, there may have been a regular succession of bishops or popes, from the apostles to the present time, the priesthood has been so corrupted; or in other words, those who professed to have it, have been such corrupt men, that God has not acknowledged it, or continued His power with it, for several hundred years; therefore, there is no such thing as obtaining immaculate authority from the Catholic or Mother church. Hence, if there is any people on earth that have this authority, they obtained it from God, through the agency of an angel, or it has been handed down from the apostles by a regular set of successors abstract from the Mother church; but it is impossible to sustain the idea of a succession of this kind.— But I must hasten.

Having shown the impossibility of receiving a valid priesthood from the Romish church, I will now examine the authority, and relative positions of some of the most prominent of the Protestant societies; however, I will first make a few general remarks.

I want the reader to distinctly understand that my research into this matter, does not grow out of any ill will that I have towards any society: for as I have before observed, I believe there has been, and is now, many honest and sincere persons in all societies, who are seeking after the truth, whom the Lord will by no means cast off in the day of eternity; but they are deceived in many respects. If it is not wilful blindness, they are in a great degree excusable; but if the Lord sends them a message that will inform their better judg-

ments, then their salvation depends upon the reception of it; but if they reject it, God will no longer hold them guiltless. I wish to treat all men with the respect, that they merit by their conduct and bearing; but certainly, if the whole Christian world are in a state of apostacy, and destitute of the holy priesthood, there is no harm in making it known, or publishing it abroad; for so doing, may be the means of rescuing many from the serpent fangs of bigotry, and fanaticism. Neither does it betray a want of charity; for true charity, is to tell a man, in the spirit of meekness, of his evil ways, and of the danger he is in; and if possible, rescue him from the iron grasp of delusion: and not to stupify his judgment, when the very javelins of the Almighty, and arrows of misfortune, are aiming at his soul. Again, I presume the reader has by this time discovered that my mode of exposing error, is by the means of reason, and the scriptures; and if hereafter, I should base my argument upon false premises, and not adduce sufficient evidence to sustain my position, then, of course, no one will be under any obligation to coincide with my views; therefore, I solicit the reader to proceed with me in good spirits, and with good feelings, being assured that what I shall say with regard to the authority of the sects of the day, does not arise from any animosity, that I have against any of them.

It will be remembered that I have demonstrated the fact, that the Catholic or Mother church, is an apostate one; therefore, any authority that has been received from her, is not good.—But to proceed.

About the middle of the Eleventh century, the Greek church separated from the Latin; hence, the former cannot make any higher claims to the priesthood than the latter.

The Albigenses, Waldenses, Petrobrusians, and many other societies of inferior rank, arose in the Twelfth century; but all were the offspring of the Mother church. The Walden-

ces were the followers of Peter Waldus or Waldo, an opulent merchant of Lyons. He dissented from the Catholics about the year A. D. 1160. Without doubt, many in all these societies were good and exemplary Christians, as far as their knowledge and authority extended ; but Dr. Mosheim, and several other eminent historians, have made it plain that they had no church power or authority, other than that which they received from the Mother church.

In the fore part of the Sixteenth century the famous reformation commenced. The Lutheran church was founded by Luther, who was a Monk of the Augustinian order; hence, he received no priesthood from any other source but the Catholic church, or from the Lord by revelation, and the agency of an angel ; but it is not probable he received it direct from heaven : for he made no pretensions of the kind, or if he did, we have no account of it ; consequently, the authority of the Lutheran church, and those that have dissented from it, can only be traced back to the Roman hierarchy. Melancthon, Zuinglius, and others, who were engaged with Luther in the reformation, were also dissenters from her ranks.

John Calvin, who was the originator of the Calvinistic doctrine, and virtually the coiner of Presbyterianism, was also an apostate from the Mother church,

The church of England was founded by king Henry VIII. bishop Cranmer, and others, who were dissenters from the Catholics ; or rather, they were a set of insubordinate characters. Indeed, all these celebrated reformers were apostates from the Mother church, and if they had any authority at all, to preach and establish churches, they must have either received it from her, or from heaven ; but they all protested against her, and whom they, with the apostle, distinguish by the opprobrious epithet of "Mother of harlots," and "Abomination of the earth." But I contend, that if she is a corrupt Church, it is impossible for her to confer authority that

is pure : " A corrupt fountain cannot send forth pure water." " A corrupt tree cannot produce good fruit." " Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles." Again, in national and church affairs, it is an established principle, that those who confer authority, have the right and power to take it away, or revoke it; therefore, if these reformers received authority from the Mother church, she has all sufficient power to take it from them, which she most certainly did do : for she excommunicated, condemned as heretics, and execrated them to all intents and purposes. But they certainly received no priesthood from heaven; for they universally denied immediate revelation from God to themselves, and made no pretensions to the administration of angels; therefore, of the two, I would take the authority of the Catholics in preference to that of the Protestants; but it is evident that neither have any that God acknowledges to be legal. Many of these noted reformers, were men of the most infamous character, as will be seen from " Dr, Mosheim's Church History," " Buck on the Reformation," and Cobbet Do.; however, the character of men, is not the object in view at present.

The Baptists chiefly owe their origin to Menno Simon, who in the early part of his public career was a Romish priest.

The Methodist church was founded by Mr. John Wesley and others, who were members of the church of England; hence, she is the second-generation offspring of the Catholic church. Indeed, nearly if not all, the Protestant denominations with their divisions, subdivisions, and factions, are the offspring of the church of Rome; and as all join in calling her the " Mother of harlots," I leave the reader to judge who her daughters are, and what must be their character.

The apostle in the following, plainly describes the corruption of the Christian world in our own times: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall

depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared [as] with a hot iron.”* This must be regarded as a prediction; and the “latter times,” here mentioned, certainly allude to times that are to immediately precede the consummation of the present order of times or time. It is true, the apostle applies the term “these last days” to his own time, for the most obvious reason, no days had succeeded those in which he lived; but when he predicts future events that are to transpire in the “latter times,” or “days,” he is to be understood, as having reference to the days that are to immediately precede the second advent of Christ. Then from the above we learn that in the “latter times,” men were to depart from the faith, and give heed to doctrines of devils: and it is a notorious fact, that the policy of his satanic majesty, has ever been to instigate the people to reject as many of the precepts of the gospel, and to deny as many of the promises of God to His people as he can.

Again, the apostle says: “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful; unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of Godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.”† This is an accurate description of the Christian world at the present time: “*They have a form of Godliness, but they deny the power thereof.*” Every society has a certain form of Godliness; but is there a Protestant society in Christendom that has in it apostles, prophets, and inspired men, and that practice the same ordinances in every respect for the same purpose,

* 1 Ti. iv, 1, 2.

† 2 Ti. iii, 1–5.

and that contend for the same spiritual gifts that Christ and His apostles said, were for the believer? or in other other words, does its form correspond with that of the Primitive church? I answer in the negative. But mark, the apostle says, "they shall have *a* form," and not *the* form "of Godliness."

Now reader you can demonstrate the fact, that the sectarian world are destitute of the holy priesthood: for if you interrogate them upon the subject, they will tell you, that none were to have the Melchisedec order of priesthood in the Christian dispensation, but Christ: and if you ask them, if they have the Aaronic order, they will say that none were to have it, but the sons of Aaron: thus they will in toto deny having either order of the priesthood, which is precisely what the apostle has foretold: "They shall deny the power thereof." The priesthood constitutes one of the most prominent features of the power of Godliness: for it is the power given to the people of God by which they can work in His name; and when faith co-operates with it, it is the power to work miracles. Therefore, as the sects of the day, deny this power, it is not to be expected, as I explained in the preceding chapter, that they can work miracles, and receive those spiritual gifts that pertain to the kingdom; for they are not legally adopted into it themselves, neither have they any authority to adopt others into it.

But says one, if they have not this priesthood, what authority do they possess? The apostle answers this thus: "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."* From this we learn, that as soon as those who are the subjects of the apostle's prophecy would no longer endure sound doctrine, they should heap to themselves teachers; that is, they would create a priesthood of their own, and from an order of ecclesiastics, and by this means turn from the truth unto fables. And when we read the history of the past and present, we cannot but justify this prediction; for instance, at the establishment of several of the Protestant societies, synods and councils, were held by those who had been excommunicated from the Mother church, and who had no more authority to ordain others to the ministry, than an Ethiopian from the sandy deserts of Africa; yet they ordained bishops, elders, &c.; hence, the power given, was a *man-made priesthood*, because it was instituted by a conclave of men who had no other authority than that of man.

Again, when we compare the various creeds, that have been instituted for the government of religious societies, with the New Testament, we can easily comprehend what the apostle alludes to in the expression, "*they shall be turned from the truth unto fables.*" Now the only difference between the priesthood the apostles received, and the one this multitude of teachers have, is, the former was instituted by the Lord, and the latter by man. Peter says: "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you; whose judgment now of a long time

* 2 Ti. iv, 1-4.

lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.”* This, no doubt, alludes to the sects, parties, and false teachers, not only of preceding ages, but of our own times. Many more predictions of the apostles and prophets, which are definite upon the subject of the apostacy, might be adduced ; but the foregoing must suffice for the present.

Now reader, in order to satisfy yourself still further I advise you to carefully compare the creeds or doctrines of the orthodox societies, with the new Testament, and you will find that the one scarcely resembles the other. This variation should be regarded as convincing proof, that the Christian world are in a state of apostacy. And you will discover that for the holy priesthood, they have substituted a *man-made* one ; for the Spirit of Christ they have factious spirits, for truth error, for light darkness ; and in a word, they have turned things upside down, and changed the ancient order of the church into sectarian forms and institutions. But once more upon Protestant authority ;—it is not at all probable, that the Protestant denominations have received any priesthood from heaven : for they make no pretensions of the kind ; and they also deny having it ; therefore, it must necessarily follow, that they have assumed all they possess. According to the bible, when the Lord undertook to establish a church a people, or His kingdom, His mode of doing it, has universally been to raise up good men upon whom He conferred the office of the priesthood, and when they done the work allotted to them, it was His work, because He authorized them ; therefore, if we reason from analogy, the Protestant reformers had no authority to administer ordinances, and build up churches, and inasmuch as they did, they done it upon their own responsibility, and without power from God. “ Surely,” says the prophet, “ the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secrets unto His

servants the prophets.”* If these societies were raised up by the express command of God, He would have made it known by a revelation. “Every plant,” said Christ, “which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.”† But I will here observe, that I have no disposition to under-rate the good effects of the reformation; but frankly admit, that it has been the means of doing good. Indeed, every revolution among the nations, since the world began, has resulted in some good; but oftentimes the evil has overbalanced the good. The reformation has been the cause of much bloodshed, and also a great confusion in religious matters; yet the absurdities of the Protestants, are not parallel with those of the Mother church; but as divine Providence overruled the works of Cyrus the Persian, that they produced some good; so peradventure, it is with the reformation. The good effects of it are, a religious freedom, morality, the right of exercising our own judgments upon religious matters, an astonishing improvement in the republic of letters, an extraordinary advancement in the fine arts, nations have thrown off the yoke of political bondage, the state of society has been greatly improved, and the work of civilization greatly augmented. All of this has contributed in a reasonable degree, to prepare the way for the glorious work of God of the latter-days.

Now under consideration that the Jews, Catholics, and Protestants, are in a state of apostacy, or are living under broken covenants, and that the Lord has promised to perform some of the most majestic works that He has ever accomplished since the beginning; viz., the restoration of the tribes of Israel, who are now in a dispersed condition, to the land of their fathers, and which is to be attended with great signs and miracles; the gospel is to be preached to all the world for a witness of the approach of the second advent of Christ, &c.,

* Am. iii, 7. † Mat. xv, 13.

&c., I ask the reader what should be done? You will certainly respond with me, that God will restore the priesthood, raise up servants, endow them with power, and send them to perform this majestic work; but for the argument upon this point, I refer you to the following chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

The Object of New Revelation—Rule for the Interpretation of Prophecy—The Lord Foretold that He would send His Angel with the Priesthood or Everlasting Gospel, and also, Reorganize His Kingdom First upon the American Continent—Dissertation upon Nebuchadnezzar's Dream and Daniel's Interpretation of it—The Lord's Ensign of the Latter-days, and the Restoration of the House of Israel, &c., &c.

I MUST confess it is not always very pleasant to read of the wickedness of our fellow-man, or of his depravity; but duty sometimes imposes upon us the task of disclosing, and exposing to view, the high-handed abominations of others, and the attendant effects of the same, that posterity may take warning and shun those vices that were fraught with so many fatal consequences to their ancestors. And certainly, nothing but a feeling sense of duty, prompted me to disclose the awful condition and apostacy of the Christian world, in the manner exhibited in the preceding chapter. Indeed, the exigency of the case requires much plainness; therefore, I have thus far avoided flattery, knowing that truth

in its original simplicity, is the most effectual remedy for the infatuation of a set of apostates ; although, its effect is rather severe upon the mind, it is certainly the only proper antidote yet discovered.

I have set down nought in malice ; but have recorded facts as they are without any false colouring, yet the picture I have necessarily drawn, is not one of the most pleasing character ; but if there is any blame, it should not be attached to me ; for my circumstances are so peculiar, that it would not become me to speak well of the evil that men do, or to praise them for their abominations.—But according to the old adage : “ The darkest hour is just before day ; ” so reader I trust, it is in this case ; therefore, we will let the past suffice for the present, and look, or at least hope, for better things to come ; hence, I earnestly request you to divest yourself of all incoherent prejudice, and proceed with me, in the investigation, with liberal feelings : for I shall not take you into the speculative wilderness or confusion of the vague opinions of men, and conflicting comments upon the scriptures ; but into the harmonious field of prophecy, and prophetic vision, where I shall exhibit to you the true church, or kingdom of God with all its attendant blessings, coming up out of the wilderness progressing in its onward course amidst the confusion of the world, and opposition of those who have the mark of the beast, and many flocking to its folds, which will increase its magnitude until Christ shall come with all His saints and angels, and commence His reign with them, as King of kings and Lord of lords ; also many other important events connected with this glorious work, which are of great importance to all mankind.

In the preceding chapter, I proved that the whole Christian world are destitute of the holy priesthood, and to a certain extent in a state of apostacy ; but in this, I shall establish beyond successful contradiction, that it was to be restored,

and the kingdom of God reorganized, and also that majestic works are to be performed. And I wish the reader to distinctly understand, that I do it in defence of the doctrine of the "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints:" for the position taken by this society, is, that in consequence of the apostacy before mentioned, the power of the priesthood has been taken from the church; hence, it is necessary that it should be restored, or given to such men as the Lord shall choose as instruments to perform His work, that His kingdom may be organized on earth in fulfillment of numerous predictions of the prophets: and the attentive reader will see hereafter, whether or not our position is a correct one. But I will here observe that it would be unreasonable for me to attempt to give all the particulars of our doctrine in its relative connection with important events that are the subjects of prophecy; therefore, I shall only reason upon the most prominent points, and particularly, those that distinguish us from other religious societies, and leave the intelligent reader to fill up the interstices by the assistance of the scriptures, and several interesting books, published by men of talent in good standing in the society.

Again, one of the principal objects I have had in view throughout the former part of this work, is the justification of the doctrine of the above society; therefore, if there is any strength or force in my argument, the base or foundation upon which we rest our sentiments is good; if not, the whole superstructure will ultimately fall to ruin. But as the idea of a new revelation is so much objected to by the Christian community, I deem it necessary to make a few remarks upon this point, before I enter upon the subject-matter of the chapter.

Many individuals of the present age suppose that a new revelation cannot be given without revealing a new gospel; but such imbecility in judgment is a more fit characteristic

of a wild barbarian, than of one that bears the name of an enlightened Christian. The gospel is the invariable rule or plan of salvation, and its antiquity is certainly equal to that of the earth, and through an obedience to its precepts, the ancients were adopted into the family of God; hence, they became the Sons of God. Indeed, the gospel is an established principle, and there never was such a thing known, as a revelation being given to reveal a new one. The Lord has had many notable works to perform at different periods of the world, and He has ever given such revelations as were adapted to these works. For instance, He led Noah into the secret of the purposed flood, and commanded him to build an ark for his temporal safety. This command answered for him, and no other person. Lot was saved by fleeing to Zoar, as he was commanded, and not by building an ark. Moses did not build an ark in order to deliver Israel from Egyptian bondage; but obeyed the commands that the Lord gave him; and it would be folly for individuals of the present age to build an ark, or to leave Egypt in order to save themselves, either temporally or spiritually. God gave revelations to these men for special purposes; hence, each one was adapted to the work for which it was given. Again, when the Lord has had any noted work to perform, He has generally sent an angel with a message to His servant or servants, whom He made instruments of to accomplish the work then at hand; and it is reasonable for us to suppose that the message or revelation was adapted to the work for which it was given. Christ gave special revelations, and directions, to His disciples, because He had given them a particular work to do. In the latter-days, He has a majestic work to perform, as will be seen hereafter; therefore, He will send His angel with special messages and directions, that this great work may be done according to His will: yet no other gospel will be revealed; for it is unchangable, and adapted to all people in every age, and under

all circumstances.—But now a word about the mode of interpreting prophecy.

It is a fact, that example or precedent, is the best rule for the interpretation of the predictions of the prophets, that are yet to be fulfilled ; hence, all the prophecies which are not written in a figurative style, and have no metaphorical sign prefixed to them, should be regarded as a literal relation of facts ; for it is notoriously true, that all the prophecies of the Old Testament, that were fulfilled in the person of our Saviour, were literally fulfilled ; also, those that related to other events, without an exception ; therefore, wherein is the propriety of the idea, that those which relate to the future will not be fulfilled in the same way ? Peter says : “ No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation.”* Metaphors and parables, should be understood as such ; yet they are either explained, or are so plain there is no difficulty in understanding them ; but where it is written, thus and thus. saith the Lord, certain events shall take place, I look for a literal fulfilment of every word.—But now to the subject.

Now according to the view I take of the subject, the consistency of the whole position of the before mentioned society, in a great degree, depends upon the establishment of the idea, that the Lord was to raise up servants, and give them the holy priesthood, and reorganize His kingdom, in order that His great work may be accomplished, and the way prepared for the second advent of the Messiah, &c, &c.; therefore, I shall now make it my business to place the above idea beyond successful contradiction.—But now for the evidence.

The disciples of Christ interrogated Him thus : “ Tell us, when these things shall be ? and what shall be the sign of thy coming and the end of the world ? ”† The first question relates to the destruction of Jerusalem, which they had previously conversed about ; but the latter to Christ’s second

* 2 Pe. i, 20.

† See Mat. xxiv chap.

advent, and the end of the world, that is to take place at the same time; but the manner in which He answered them is according to the old custom of the prophets, which was to first give a brief or general outline of the subject, and afterwards to take up each item by itself and particularize upon it. After He had given them a brief sketch of some important events that were to transpire before, and at, the destruction of Jerusalem, He outlined some of the most prominent things or events, that are to precede His second appearance or the end of the world, as omens of its near approach; the greatest of which is as follows: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." From this we learn that the gospel is to be preached to all the world as a warning or witness, that the end is at hand. It is true, Paul says that in his day, the gospel was preached to every creature under heaven; but it certainly was not in fulfilment of the above prediction; for this reason, the apostles were not sent to warn the world that the end, in the sense Christ used the term, was to immediately come; therefore, we must receive it as a prediction of an event that is to immediately precede the second advent of the Messiah.

Connect our Saviour's parable of the "wheat and the tares," and His explanation of it, with this, and it makes the subject perfectly plain and consistent.—He said: "And in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn." He explained as follows: "The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one: the enemy that sowed them is the devil: the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels (or servants.) As therefore the tares are gathered

and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world, &c.* From this we discover that the universal destruction of the wicked, will be the end of the world, which the prophets and apostles, agree will take place at the second appearance of Christ.

Now the matter stands thus, it would be unjust for the Lord to bring an overwhelming destruction upon the world without first giving them a timely warning of it, that all may if they will, prepare for it by turning to the Lord; therefore, previous to the end, He will renew the gospel dispensation by restoring the holy priesthood, with which He will commission efficient men, and send them to preach the gospel of the kingdom to all nations as above. Some individuals however, infer from the following, that all this was fulfilled, at or before the destruction of Jerusalem: "Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." In order to understand this, the reader should keep in mind the questions that the apostles propounded to Christ; the first of which as I before observed, relates to the destruction of Jerusalem. After He had dispensed with this, He informed them what shall be the signs of His second coming, when He shall appear in great glory with His angels, and destroy the wicked. The signs of this latter event, are the preaching of the gospel as before mentioned, wars and rumors of wars, pestilence, famines, signs in the sun, moon and stars, also on the earth, distress of nations, and men's hearts failing them for fear while looking for those things which are coming upon the earth, and said He, "This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled." This declaration is governed by the parable of "the fig-tree," that immediately precedes it; hence, it alludes to the generation in which these signs shall begin to appear: or to read the passage thus: "*The gene-*

ration in which these signs shall begin to appear shall not pass," &c., explains the whole matter.

Our Saviour's parable of the "Labourers and the vineyard," is plain upon this subject; in which He compares the kingdom of heaven to a man that went out in the morning, and also at the third, sixth, ninth, and eleventh hours of the day, and hired labourers to work in his vineyard.* It is evident that the term *hour*, here stands for a noted epoch of the world, or the commencement of an important dispensation; and the *day*, stands for the world: for instance, in the morning of the creation, the Lord sent labourers into the vineyard; in the days of Noah and Abraham, He sent others into it; and also at the commencement of the Mosaic dispensation. At the opening of the Christian, which was the *ninth hour*, He had a great work to do; therefore, He sent many into the vineyard; but in the latter-days, which is the *eleventh hour* He will call many, and commission them to go to the nations, and preach the gospel of the kingdom. This *eleventh hour*, must certainly apply to an age, as late as the nineteenth century, from the fact, it is but one hour before the evening or time of recompense; or in other words, the elapse of the time from the *eleventh hour* to the time of the recompense, is very short in comparison to that of the others. Again it will be remembered, that three hours of time passed away between each time of calling except the latter. This does not a little favour the idea, that the Lord's work of the latter-days, will be a short one. All admit, that the time of reckoning and reward, will take place at the end of the day or the world, when Christ shall come and make an end of the present state of things, and put the saints in possession of the kingdom, and the greatness of it under the whole heavens. Therefore, I regard this parable as conclusive evidence, to sustain my position.

[* See Mat. xx chap.

But I will now call the attention of the reader to the testimony of John the Revelator.—He first saw the rise of the beasts, the saints overcome, and the prevalence of Babylon the Great ; but as the prophetic vision rolled before his mind, and he penetrated futurity, he saw the time when the Lamb of God shall stand upon Mount Zion with an hundred and forty-four thousand of His saints. After this, he saw the manner in which this glorious event shall be brought about, which is as follows. “ And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, [*or firmament*] having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come : and worship Him that made heaven, and the earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.”* It is not the business of an angel to act the part of a priest on earth ; therefore, the idea conveyed in the above, is that an angel was to appear with a commission to preach the gospel to all the world as a witness, that the *end* or hour of God’s judgment is at hand. I have not been a little amused at the various opinions of modern divines with regard to the meaning of this prophetic vision.—Some suppose that it alludes to the foreign missionaries, others to the bible societies, or the translation of the bible into the languages of the heathen nations ; but another celebrated writer contends that it will be fulfilled by the aerial flight of the missionaries under an advanced state of balloon navigation ; but all I have to say about these opinions, is that they carry their own refutation with them, and that the writers should be commended for their fruitful imaginations. But I will venture to say, that the only sensible interpretation of this vision, is that the Lord made known to John, that at some future period, He would send an angel with the holy priesthood to commission His

* Re. xiv, 6, 7.

servants to go to all nations, and people, and preach the gospel to them in its original purity, and gather the honest in heart and good among men from the midst of Babylon, and thus prepare the way for the second advent of the Messiah. Again, if there was no other evidence in the scriptures, that there was to be an apostacy after the days of the apostles, this alone would be sufficient to convince any rational person of this fact: for this reason, the angel was to have the everlasting gospel to preach *to all nations, tongues and people*, consequently to every society, sect or denomination. But the strength of the evidence is seen in the following: if all Christendom, have legal authority to preach the gospel, and administer the ordinances of it, and are not in a state of apostacy, it would be superfluous for God to send an angel with it to preach to them after they had even legally obeyed it. It would be nonsense for the Lord to undertake to reveal a thing or principle, that the human family are already acquainted with, or to give authority to them that they already possess. To be plain, the Lord ^{did} knew there would be a great falling away, and that the church would become so corrupt, that He would not acknowledge its authority; therefore, He disclosed to John that in His own due time, He would restore the priesthood in order that His great work may be accomplished. And mark, this gospel is for *all people or every society*; therefore, all the priests and ministers of the Christian world are to have the gospel preached to them, as a witness that the hour of God's judgment is at hand.

The reader can satisfy himself, that this prophetic vision alludes to the latter-day work, by an examination of the whole chapter from which it is extracted, and from which it will be seen, that the events that are to immediately follow after the appearance of the angel, have not yet transpired: for instance, —first, it is said, that when the gospel shall be proclaimed, it shall be said, that the hour of God's judgment or the

time of recompense is at hand. Paul speaking of the future, says; "Christ shall judge the world at His appearing and kingdom." Secondly, the destruction of Babylon the Great: this was not fulfilled at the destruction of Jerusalem, nor in the first century; for it is a settled point, that this Babylon did not rise or exist until several hundred years after Christ. Thirdly, the harvest of the earth or universal destruction of the wicked: it will be remembered that Christ said, "the harvest is the end of the world." Paul applies the term "end of the world," to the end of the Jewish or Mosaic economy; but I am certain that neither Christ, nor John, allude to this; for John was banished to the Island of Patmos, where he wrote his Revelation, more than twenty years after the destruction of Jerusalem; and the harvest of the earth was one of the things that the angel showed him, which was in the future, and which at once excludes the possibility of its being accomplished at the above destruction; hence, as we know, that it has been fulfilled at no time since, we must look for it in the future. Fourthly, about the time of the down fall of Babylon, and the harvest of the earth, those that have died in the faith of the Lord, are to be resurrected and rewarded; therefore, John was commanded to write thus: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." Certainly, every rational person will admit that these events are in the future; consequently, it must be admitted that the appearance of the angel is a latter-day work.

The following is illustrative of this subject: "And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, *having the seal of the living God*: and he cried with a

loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of God in their foreheads."* This is certainly most sublime and exquisite, yet directly to the point. John frequently mentions that he saw angels that had power to trouble the earth, and its inhabitants with plagues and destructions; and the four angels mentioned in the above, are represented as having a work of this description to perform. But just at the time they were ready to commence their work of plagues and destruction, the angel with the *seal of God* appeared, and cried with a loud voice, and commanded them to hold still, or to stay their work until the servants of God were sealed. Now it is evident, that this angel with the *seal*, and the one that was seen flying in the midst of heaven "having the everlasting gospel to preach," &c., is the same one; and the *seal of God*, and everlasting gospel, are synonymous. The *seal of God*, is evidently the holy priesthood, and the gospel connected together. By the authority of the priesthood, as I have before explained, individuals are adopted into the family of God, and thus become fit temples for the reception of the Holy Spirit, by which the apostle says, "We are sealed unto the day of redemption."† But by the means of the priesthood, in one sense of the word, the blessings of the gospel of peace are received; therefore, it is plain that the *seal*, which the angel had, that John saw, is the priesthood; for it is the power to preach the gospel, administer its ordinances, and by which the servants of God are sealed; or in other words, it is the sealing power. Again, if we regard it as a figure, it is a very good one; for the priesthood is conferred by the imposition of hands, and the members of the church are confirmed and receive the Holy Ghost in the same way.

Most certainly the foregoing scripture, is a prediction of

* Re. vii, 1—3.

† Ep. iv. 30.

the restoration of the priesthood just in time for the honest in heart, and those who love the truth to be sealed, and prepared to meet Christ when He comes. John first enumerates a hundred and forty-four thousand that are to be sealed ; after this, he saw another company which no man could number, which he says, "are to pass through great tribulation, and wash their robes, and make them pure in the blood of the Lamb." These are the church or people, the Lord will raise up to meet Him when He appears the second time.

The following corroborates the above : "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, come out of her, (that is, Babylon, which is mentioned in the preceding verses,) my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.* From this and the context, we learn that just previous, or at the time of the destruction or downfall of Babylon, the Lord is to raise up a people ; or in other words, to call His people out from the sects and parties that compose Babylon the Great, and prepare them to receive Him as follows : "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying ; Alleluia ; for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him : *for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready.* And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white : for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. *And he saith unto me, write, blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.* And he saith unto me, these are the true sayings of God."† This harmonizes with Christ's parable of the "marriage of the kings son," in which it is said, that servants were sent out to bid men to come to the wedding feast.‡ It

* Re. xviii. 4, 5.

† Re. xix. 6-9.

‡ See Mat. xxii 1-14.

must be admitted, that the "marriage supper of the Lamb," is yet in the future; therefore, the sending of servants to bid guests to come to it, must be a latter-day work.

Now reader, I opine that no unprejudiced person can read the foregoing investigation without being convinced, that the most sanguine expectation of Christ and the apostles, was that there would first be a great "falling away" from the ancient order of the church; but that in the latter-times, the Lord would restore the priesthood, and cause His church to be reorganized, that the before mentioned work may be accomplished. Indeed, is not the evidence incontrovertible, that God made a firm decree that He would do this latter work?—But we will now see what the prophets have to say about this important transaction.

Nothing could be more plain upon this subject, than the prophetic testimony of Daniel, which is recorded in the second chapter of his "Book."—The reader will do well to examine the whole chapter;—I allude to the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, and Daniel's interpretation of it.—The prophet opens the subject by saying to the king: "There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar *what shall be in the latter-days.* Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these." "Thou, O king, sawest, and, behold, a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee, and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. *Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and broke them to pieces.* Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer

threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: *and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.*"

It will be seen from Daniel's interpretation of this, that the different metals of the image stand for noted kingdoms; and it is agreed upon by Daniel, and the learned, that the first which is represented by the gold, was the Babylonian empire; the second, by the silver, was the Medo-Persian; the third, by the brass, the Greek or Macedonian; the fourth by the iron, the Roman. It is also agreed upon, that the feet and toes, which are a mixture of iron and clay, represent the various kingdoms that arose upon the ruins of Roman empire, or within the bounds of its dominions. Daniel in the seventh chapter of his "Book," settles this point in a very conclusive way.—He describes the fourth universal empire, which every modern historian admits to be the Roman, by the figure of a beast which he saw that had ten horns. In the explanation, he says that the ten horns are ten kings, and it will be remembered that in both Daniel's and John's writings, *kings* stand for kingdoms; therefore, I set it down as a settled point, that the Roman empire was to be divided into ten different kingdoms, and which are most certainly represented by the toes of the image.

Daniel explains the "stone which was cut out of the mountain without hands," to be a symbolical representation of the kingdom of God, which he says, shall destroy all the above kingdoms, fill the whole earth, and stand forever. But now the question to be decided is, at what point of time, was this kingdom to be set up; or in other words, at what time was this stone of the mountain to commence rolling? The majority of the Christian world hold forth that it commenced at the opening of the Christian dispensation; but the idea is so vague, so far-fetched, and in such direct hostility to what the prophet says, that certainly, no impartial person will for

a moment receive it: for mark, it is said, the stone was to strike the feet or toes of the image first, or as Daniel explains it: "And in the days of *these kings* shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom *which shall never be destroyed*: and the kingdom *shall not be left to other people*, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." In the days of what kings, I ask, does this allude to? I reply, the ten kingdoms represented by the toes of the image; but they were not in existence as independent kingdoms, at the birth of Christ; or in other words, the feet and toes of the image were not formed at this period: for at this time the Roman empire was at the zenith of its glory, and was not broken up or divided, as above, until more than three hundred years after it; hence, if the stone smote the image in this age, the stroke must have been upon the legs, and not upon the feet as Daniel says.

These ten kingdoms have experienced several revolutions and changes; but the principal part, if not all of them, now exist as the modern kingdoms of Europe. The Government of the United States in one sense of the word, is the offspring of one of these kingdoms. Indeed, the greatest portion of the emigrants to the New World emigrated from them; consequently, the toes of the image, to a certain extent, reach to this continent; therefore, I see no impropriety in the idea, that the kingdoms which the prophet says, the stone shall smite, are now in existence; and that if God should set the stone in motion, in this our day, it would not conflict with any scripture; but be in exact fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy.

But we will admit for a moment, that the stone commenced rolling at the onset of the Christian era, and see what a curious dilemma we shall place Daniel in, and how senseless our reasoning must necessarily be. First, according to Daniel, this kingdom was to smite the toes and feet of

the image first ; but it could not do this ; for as I have already observed, the feet and toes were not formed until more than three hundred years after this date. Secondly, it is said, this kingdom shall not be destroyed or left to other people, but shall stand forever. Here again we are compelled to join issue, with not only Daniel, but many of the prophets, and apostles : for they have positively predicted, as I have before shown, that there would be a general apostacy or “falling away” between the first and second advents of Christ. Indeed, I have before proved to a demonstration, that the Christian world are in a state of apostacy and that the kingdom of God has been disorganized ; therefore, if we admit that the stone commenced its motion as above, we must also admit that it has been in a manner annihilated. Furthermore, the kingdom that was organized in the days of the apostles, was left to other people ; or in other words, a popish hierarchy arose upon its ruins. Thirdly, this stone was to beat fine, or destroy the kingdoms represented by the image, and may I not say, all the kingdoms of the world, so that but one should be left, which is the kingdom of God. And admitting, that it commenced as is before stated, we will now see what progress it has made. The church apparently prospered during the first and second centuries, and the number of its members was greatly increased ; after this, the work of apostacy gained ground more rapidly, till at length, the church went into the wilderness, lost its original decorations or gifts and blessings ; the Catholic hierarchy arose upon its ruins, which for the time being we will say is the stone of the mountain ; but as we trace its course through succeeding ages, we discover that instead of its beating fine all the kingdoms of the world, it took a place in the rank of temporal kingdoms, waged war with some, built up and supported others, *and was itself sustained* or supported by several of these ten kingdoms ; but this is not the only difficulty that

we are getting the prophet into,—It continued its course for a while; but contrary to what he says or expected, a barrier happened to be in the way which rent it in twain, (I here allude to the separation of the Greek church from the Latin;) but it partially recovered itself from the shock, and although somewhat maimed, it pursued its course; but alas! it was again forced against an obstacle, which concussion split or rent it into separate parts, and some of these parts were ultimately fractured and torn into atoms; or to be plain, after the famous reformation, the Protestant societies were divided into scores of conflicting sects or factions, and in several instances with them, and also with the Catholics, church and state have been, and are now united, and that too, with the very kingdoms that Daniel says shall be destroyed; and what is still more singular, John the Revelator speaking of these ten kingdoms, says they shall make war with Christ when He comes in power and in His glory. And it certainly, would be almost an impossibility for them to wage war, without the churches being more or less concerned in it. Indeed, I might enumerate many more difficulties, that we would plunge the prophet into, if we should fix the time for the stone to be set in motion at the commencement of the Christian dispensation; but I will forbear, lest I weary the patience of the reader.

Now the only idea that will in every respect harmonize with what the prophet says, is that the kingdoms, which the toes of the image represent, are now in existence, and that the kingdom of God indicated by the stone of the mountain, is a latter-day work.—But now for the particular application.

The church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, contend that God has sent His angel with the priesthood, which has been conferred upon some of the leading men of the society, and by this means the kingdom of God has been legally organized. We also contend, that America is the land upon which this kingdom was to be first established; and from

whence the servants of God shall go to all the world, and proclaim the fulness of the everlasting gospel. How exactly this corresponds with Nebuchadnezzar's dream.—The head of this image was located in Asia; but his feet and toes in Europe; and when we consider that the American nations, are the offspring of the European kingdoms, may I not say, that the toes reach even to this land; hence, here is the place for the stone to be set in motion: and remember, the course of the stone, is to be exactly to the reverse from that of the growth of the image from head to feet. But the force and consistency of the above, will be seen from our remarks hereafter upon the xviii chap. of Isaiah.—But perhaps a little explanation as to the manner in which this kingdom was to be established, will be serviceable to the reader.

I have before set forth the manner in which the kingdom of God was organized or established in the days of the apostles; but the Lord foresaw, that it would be disorganized; but He also foretold, that in His own due time, He would re-establish it in order that His great work may be carried into effect. But says one, if this kingdom represented by the stone, is only a reorganization of the one that previously existed, wherein is the impropriety of saying that it was set up at the first appearance of Christ? I answer, that God has had a kingdom on earth, at intervals, ever since the beginning of the world; consequently, the one of the apostolic age, was in a great degree, only a reorganization of one that existed before; therefore, Daniel must not be understood to allude to something entirely new; but to a particular or specified time when God was to permanently establish His kingdom so that it shall never be destroyed or disorganized. The manner in which this stone is to strike the image; or in other words, the effect that the kingdom of God, will have upon the kingdoms of the world, seems to me to be as follows. This kingdom was to be organized according to the

example set forth in the New Testament, and of course, at first be disconnected with territory ; but as it is a time for the people of God to gather together, in order to prepare for the appearance of Christ, the officers of it, or the Lord's ministers, will go to all the nations of the earth, and especially the kingdoms of Europe, to proclaim the gospel ; and they will gather out from them the honest in heart, and sincere lovers of the truth ; or to use a favourite maxim of Christ, they will gather out the *salt* or *savers* of the earth. This will increase the magnitude of the church, and gradually weaken the kingdoms of the world : for there will not be righteousness enough left among them, to save them from destruction ; therefore, the Lord will let loose upon them the arrows of His judgements, and in His hot displeasure vex them so that nation after nation, shall feel the force of His avenging power, and tremble, and ultimately fall to ruin. In the meanwhile, the stone of the mountain will increase in magnitude ; the Jews will be awakened at this, take the warning, and flee to Jerusalem, and the land of their fathers, to await the awful crisis. The remaining nations will be alarmed at all this, and consequently, will wage war against them, and succeed in rallying their forces around Jerusalem : at this moment, the heavens will be unveiled, the Son of God shall appear, and save His people, and destroy His enemies, or as John says : " These (ten kingdoms) shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them : for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings : and they that are with Him, are called, and chosen, and faithful."* Thus the stone of the mountain, will beat the image, and make it fine like the chaff of the summer threshing-floor, and no place shall be found for it. Then Christ will destroy all the regal power of the political kingdoms of the world, subject the earth to himself, and connect territory with His kingdom, which shall

* Re. xvii. 14

then fill the whole earth ; or in other words, the saints shall possess territory, or inherit the earth ; at which time it will be said, the kingdoms of this world, have become the kingdom of Christ. Thus the Millennium, the sabbath of creation, or rest for the people of God, will commence.

Daniel beautifully describes this happy period as follows : “ I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages, should serve Him : His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.” In the sequel he says : “ But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.” “ I beheld the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them ; until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High ; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.” “ And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.”* From this we discover that this latter-day kingdom, was not to be set up until near the close of the reign of the little horn, or the kingdom of popes ; and it is also evident that the kingdom of God here alluded to, is the same as the one that is represented by the stone of the mountain. Again, all that Daniel says about the kingdom of God, perfectly agrees with what John says about the angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to all nations, and people ; and therefore, it is evident that they both allude to the same thing.

* Da. vii chap.

I will now invite the attention of the reader to the xviii chap. of Isaiah, which certainly contains an account of a most pleasing view that he had, of not only the establishment of the before mentioned kingdom ; but of the place or land upon which it was to be commenced, which he thus describes : “ Woe to the land shadowing with wings, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia ; that sendeth ambassadors by the sea, even in vessels of bulrushes upon the waters, saying go ye swift messengers, to a nation scattered and peeled, to a people terrible from their beginning hitherto ; a nation meted out and trodden down, whose land the rivers have spoiled ! All the inhabitants of the world and dwellers on the earth, see ye, when He lifteth up an *ensign* upon the mountains ; and when He bloweth the trumpet hear ye.”

Now any person who is acquainted with the Hebrew language, knows that an improvement in the translation of the above can be made with propriety :—It should read thus : “ *Ho ! to the land shadowing with (or in the symbol of) wings, that lies beyond the rivers of Cush.*” This by no means changes the sense ; but reduces it to the modern style of phraseology, which I trust will greatly assist the reader in understanding the true meaning of the prophet.

But now the question is, what land does the prophet address these words to ? In order to correctly come at this, we must first consider that the prophet resided at Jerusalem, or somewhere near that city ; secondly, to find the land that he speaks of, it is necessary to be certain as to the location of the land of Cush or Ethiopia.

The general name that the Jews gave to all the north part of Africa was, “ the land of Cusheam.” Ethiopia proper, is situated south, and south-west of Egypt, and is now called Abyssinia ; but according to Herodotus, the Ethiopian nations were very numerous ; and it is evident that the Greeks, and Romans, called the most of the African nations, Ethiopians.

The writer of the celebrated voyage of Hanno, (which is to be found in Mr. H. Murray's *Encyclopædia of Geography*,) a Carthagenian navigator who attempted to sail round Africa, gives an account of Ethiopians near the Straits of Gibraltar, or Pillars of Hercules; also that he sailed twelve days along the western coast of Africa, which he says, was then inhabited by Ethiopians, who were very numerous. This coast is now called the coast of Morocco; hence, the ancient Moors were called Ethiopians or Cushites. Indeed, after a careful research into the history of this people, I have come to the following conclusion.—Cush was the son of Ham, and his progeny, soon after the flood, settled somewhere in the neighborhood of the river Euphrates; but at a very early period, some of them emigrated to Africa, and at first, located somewhere about the head waters of the Nile. According to Josephus, these Ethiopians were a powerful nation in the days of Moses; and also, that they inhabited the country that lies south, and south-west of Egypt; but they were a warlike people and had a great desire for conquest; hence, they soon spread over the north part of Africa: and in consequence of their inhabiting the greatest part of this continent, which was then known to the civilized nations, the Jews called it the land of Cush or Cusheam; but the Greeks, and Romans gave it the general name of Ethiopia, and the people they called Ethiopians, the same as we give the inhabitants of all Europe, the general name of Europeans; although, they are divided into many nations; therefore, it is evident that in the days of Isaiah, the north part of Africa was called Cush, and the *rivers* that the prophet alludes to, are those that flow into the Mediterranean sea along the coast of the Barbary states; and also those that flow into the Atlantic Ocean along the coast of Morocco. Now I presume that from the foregoing, the reader will readily discover that the prophet alludes to a land that lies directly west of Jerusalem, which

course strikes the Atlantic somewhere on the coast of Morocco; but still beyond this, is the land in the symbol of wings, which must certainly be America; for this reason, no other land will answer the description of the prophet. Indeed, if the prophet does not speak of this land, then he has wrote 'a mess of incomprehensible nonsense.

But there is also another view, that may be taken of this subject, which perhaps will reflect new light upon it. The word נָהָר *Nahar* not only means *river*, but has another signification, which is, *light or knowledge*. In Isaiah's day, the Carthagenians were the greatest navigators of the world, and it is asserted, that they considered as exclusively theirs, all the Mediterranean sea, west of a line stretched across from Carthage to Sicily, and that they captured all the vessels, and put to death the crews, of all other nations that were found navigating within these forbidden precincts. They were also the first that navigated about the Pillars of Hercules, the south western coast of Europe, and the western coast of Africa. In a word, in these ancient times they had the most extensive knowledge of the sea, coasts, and islands, in these parts, of any other nation; therefore, as the word *Nahar* signifies *light or intelligence* as well as *river*, perhaps, the prophet alludes to a land that is beyond the extreme *knowledge* of the Ethiopian or Cushite navigators. However, either of the above explanations, makes the idea perfectly plain, that the prophet points to America.

Again, North and South America, as will be seen from a miniature drawing of them on a map, in form and shape, very much resemble the wings of a bird; hence, it is a land in the symbol of wings, and in this respect, no other part of the globe will answer this description of the prophet. Some writers however, contend that the prophet alludes to the eagle with outspread wings upon the American ensign or flag;

but let this be as it may, the case is equally plain if we take it either way.

"*That sendeth ambassadors by the sea, even in vessels of bulrushes upon the waters, saying, go ye swift messengers of the nations,*" &c. From this it appears, that ambassadors or the servants of the Lord, are to be sent from this land to the nations of the earth; but the idea of their being transported over the sea in "*vessels of Bulrushes,*" is a novel affair indeed; however, it is probable the prophet did not intend to convey any such idea. The Hebrew word *gomey* which is here rendered *bulrushes*, has at least three significations; the first, is to *drink or swallow hastily*; the second, is to *impress*; it is also a general name for certain species of the vegetable kingdom, such as *reeds, bulrushes, and papyrus*. But in my opinion the second import of the word should be used; for it makes the passage read intelligibly, and seems to convey the intended idea of the prophet. Job speaking of the war horse, says, as it is translated in the bible: "He [*yegomey*] *swalloweth* the ground with the fierceness of his rage:"* a horse does not swallow the ground; therefore, it should be rendered, "*he impresseth the ground,*" that is, he maketh pits in the earth with his feet, deep impressions or tracks with his hoof, by which he prevents any retrograde motion; but rushes or propels himself forward with force, and great velocity; therefore, it is certainly more sensible to read the above, "*vessels impressing the face of the waters,*" instead of "*vessels of bulrushes:*" for it is not probable that vessels will ever be made of such material to escort the servants of God over the sea. Indeed, does not the prophet aptly describe our steam-vessels or ships: for it is by the action or impression of the buckets of the wheels upon the water, that propels the vessel swiftly forward; or in other words, the prophet saw in vision swift running, or rushing vessels, that move speedily

* Job. xxxix 24.

along against wind and tide. If this is not the meaning of the prophet, then it certainly should be translated "*vessels of papyrus*." Historians say that *papyrus*, is a flaggy shrub that grows in the marshes about the river Nile; the roots and body of it, were anciently used for fuel, and sometimes for timber, for ships or vessels, (such as were used in early times;) the bark was used as a substitute for paper, (which was not then invented,) for wearing apparel, and for ropes and sails for ships; hence, as the prophet saw our land with all the modern improvements; and also, our majestic maritime vessels, with all their sails spread, and the servants of God on board, he called them vessels of *papyrus*, perhaps, for the want of a better term; for he had probably seen vessels that were propelled by the action of the wind upon *papyrus* canvass, and those which he saw in vision, resembled them more than any others that he had ever beheld. Either one of the foregoing explanations, makes the subject perfectly plain; but for my own part I prefer the former.

"*To a nation terrible from their beginning hitherto,*" &c. This certainly alludes to the Jews or house of Israel, who were a powerful people at their beginning; but since that, they have been scattered among the nations, and in a manner trodden down. "*All the inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye, when He lifteth up an ENSIGN upon the mountains,*" &c. An *ensign* is a flag or banner having on it figures, and emblematical representations of the nation to which it belongs: for instance, when the noble patriots of America, declared themselves a free and independent people, they hoisted an *ensign*, upon which was inscribed an appropriate motto, which they carried with them into the field of battle, where they manfully maintained their cause. This *ensign* was a new one; hence, it signified, that a new nation had, or was just in the act of taking its place in rank of political governments. Therefore, this *ensign* of

the Lord, implies nothing more nor less, than His kingdom established on this land, figuratively speaking, with its flag, the banner of truth or the gospel, held up to the world, which plainly indicates, not only its character, but shows that God has established a rallying point for His people : or in short, as the prophetic vision rolled before the prophet's mind, he saw the establishment of the kingdom of God in the latter-days upon this continent, from whence the servants of the Lord shall go, and proclaim the fullness of the everlasting gospel to all the nations of the earth. This corresponds with my previous dissertation upon what Daniel says about the "stone of the mountain." Mr. Jackson a Jew by birth, and an excellent Hebrew scholar, and also the editor of a periodical called "The Jew," says, while discoursing upon this vision of Isaiah, that the work of God, will commence in America, that will ultimately effect the restoration of the house of Israel, and prepare the way for the appearance of the Messiah. And to me, the subject is perfectly plain ; therefore, I set it down as a fact, which is incontrovertible, that the Lord has foretold by Isaiah, that he would first organize His kingdom in the latter-days upon this land.

The prophet after speaking of this *ensign*, illustrates by figures, the awful destruction, and calamity that will come upon the wicked soon after this kingdom is organized, and the messengers or servants of the Lord are sent to the nations, which harmonizes with what John says, in the latter part of the xiv chap. of his Revelation. The prophet concludes by saying, that a people that were "scattered and trodden down," shall be brought to Zion, for a present to the Lord.

Isaiah speaks of this *ensign* in another place thus : " And He will lift up an *ensign* to the nations *from far*, and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth : and behold they shall come with speed swiftly."* The reader will see, by an

* Is. v, 26.

examination of the context, that the above is a latter-day work, which is evident from the fact, the *ensign* is to be first raised, and then the work that is to follow immediately after, is the gathering of the house of Israel from their dispersed condition. But it is evident, that the prophet does not allude to any *ensign*, that ever was, or will be, first lifted up at Jerusalem: for this reason, he says it was to be lifted up "*from far*," that is, upon some distant land. He certainly would not have said this of anything that was to transpire in his own neighborhood.

Thus far I have commented upon the evidence, that I have presented, upon somewhat of an extensive scale, in order to settle the question with regard to the place where the kingdom of God of the last days, was to be established, and thus to lay a good foundation for my argument; but hereafter, I shall comment upon the testimony in a more general way. Indeed, a prospect of more volubility than I desire at present, admonishes me to pursue this course.

In order for the reader to comprehend or understand, the various passages of scripture which I shall hereafter insert as evidence, he should bear in mind one important fact, which is, that when Christ made His appearance the first time, He did not gather the Israelites that were then dispersed, neither did He restore the kingdom to them. Although, the most sanguine expectation of the Jews, and even of the apostles at the onset of their calling, was that He would do it; but the Jews as a nation rejected Him, after which He said to them: "How oft would I have gathered you, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." "Behold, your house shall be left unto you desolate." "Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Instead, of gathering them at that time, He transferred His spiritual kingdom to the Gentiles; but said of the Jews: "They shall fall by the

edge of the sword, and shall be led captive into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." The apostles interrogated Him thus: "Lord wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" His answer was: "It is not for you to know the times and seasons, which the Father has put in His own power." This shows that the apostles were not called to go and gather Israel; therefore, all the predictions of the prophets that relate to their general restoration, and the re-establishment of the kingdom with them, were not fulfilled in the days of the apostles; but will be in the latter-days.—But I must hasten.

Isaiah in the xi chap. of his prophecy, is very plain upon this subject; after speaking of the triumphant appearance of Christ, he says, that the wolf and the lamb shall dwell together, the lion eat straw like the ox, and that nothing shall hurt or destroy in all the Lord's holy mountain; also that the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. He then tells how all this shall be brought about, which is as follows: "And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an *ensign* of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and His rest shall be glorious." The servants of the Lord will proclaim to all nations, that Christ is the Saviour of mankind, and that He is the founder of this kingdom that I have been speaking about; therefore, they will hold Him up as an *ensign*, to all the world, and many out of all nations, will be inducted into this kingdom, and thus place themselves under His protection.

The prophet thus proceeds: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set His hand the *second time* to recover the remnant of His people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and

from the islands of the sea. And He shall *set up an ensign for the nations*, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth." We know when the Lord set His hand the *first time* to establish His people upon their land; but the question is, when did or will He, do it the *second time*? It certainly was not done at the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, because they were not then gathered "from the four corners of the earth;" neither were the outcasts, or ten tribes of Isreal, who were taken away as captives by Shalmaneser king of Assyria, and located in the cities of the Medes, restored at that time: for Josephus, who flourished sometime after the birth of Christ, says they had not then returned. And we know that He did not do it, at the commencement of the Christian dispensation: for He pronounced a woe upon them, and their city; and also said, they should be carried captive into all nations; therefore, the above must be received as a prediction of the establishment of the kingdom of God, and gathering of Israel in the last days. Indeed, the fact that it is to immediately precede the happy day of rest or Millennium, when the knowledge of God shall cover the earth, establishes this idea beyond doubt.

The following shows that in the execution of this majestic work, mighty miracles will be performed: "And the Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with His mighty wind shall He shake His hand over the river, and smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dry-shod. And there shall be an highway for the remnant of His people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt."

But says one, if the Latter-day Saints, are called of God to assist in the performance of the above work, why not go to the Israelites immediately with this boon of consolation,

and not disturb the quiet of the Gentiles, who are so prejudiced against it? The following serves as an answer to this: "Thus saith the Lord God, behold, I will lift my hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people; and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders."* It will be seen from the context, that the prophet is here speaking of the work, that is to effect the restoration of Israel. Indeed, the whole chapter is most sublime, and positive upon this important subject. But according to the above quotation, the Lord was to first lift up His hand to the Gentiles; or in other words, He was to organize His kingdom among them. The idea is, that it was to be *vice versa* from what it was at the opening of the Christian dispensation, whereas then, the work was commenced among the Jews, that is, Christ called His apostles from among them, offered to give them the kingdom, sent His disciples to preach the gospel to them; and in a word, He lifted up His *ensign* to them; but they refused to rally around it, or to enlist in His cause; therefore, it was taken to the Gentiles, who were ultimately benefitted by it: for said Paul: "Seeing ye count yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." But the Lord was to commence His work of the last days among the Gentiles, raise up servants, and send them to all the nations, to preach the gospel, and warn them of the important events that are to immediately transpire; and as soon as this is done, He will send His servants to the scattered tribes of Israel, and thus they will be brought to a knowledge of the truth, and ultimately restored to their legal inheritance, and thus be benefitted by this work, which is agreeable to what our Saviour said: "The first shall be last, and the last first."

There is no necessity for anything more positive than the following: "Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the

* Is. xlix. 22.

Lord, that it shall no more be said, the Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, the Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither He had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers. Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith the Lord, and they shall fish them; and after will I send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks."* So great and majestic will be the work of the Lord, and so marvellous the deliverance of the house of Israel, that they, in order to extol the power of God, will not refer to His works and miracles, that He performed when He delivered them from Egyptian bondage; but to the power and majesty, that He will display in restoring them from the north country, and all parts of the earth. The fishers, and hunters, alluded to, are certainly the servants of God; and mark, they are to be called, and sent by Him, and not by men.

Peter while preaching to the Jews, alluded to this important work in the following words: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive [retain] *until the times of the restitution of all things*, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began."† It appears from this, that just before Christ comes the second time, He will commence the work of restoration. In the apostolic age, the Jews were dispersed; but just before Christ comes, they shall be gathered together again. The church has apostatized, and thus corrupted the priesthood; but the prophets that Peter refers to, have said that it should be re-

* Je. xvi, 14—16. † Ac. iii, 19—21.

stored ; or in other words, they have predicted that which implies it. Indeed, I infer from the above, that Peter was aware that God would do a great work in the latter-days ; and also, that Christ shall come at the time this work of restoration is going on, and finish it.

Paul speaks of this work thus : “ Wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence ; having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself : that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, He might gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, in Him.”* I presume by this time, the reader has no doubt but that God has yet a majestic work to perform, a portion of which is to gather all His saints together, from all parts of the world ; therefore, admitting the apostle alludes to the gospel dispensation, and as he knew, there would be a general “ falling away ;” consequently, he must refer to the renewal of it, that the great work of God may be carried into execution : and it will be remembered, that the Latter-Day Saints, do not contend for something altogether new in this respect ; but for a renewal of the above dispensation.

I have now arrived to the proper place for the introduction of the subject of the Book of Mormon, that is, the evidence by which it is sustained ; a synopsis of which, I intend to give. And although, it is inseparably connected with the subject, that the attention of the reader has latterly been called to ; but not being partial to long chapters, I close this one here, and shall commence a new one with the above subject.

* Ep. i. 8—10.

CHAPTER VII.

Evidence to sustain the Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon—Organization of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, and the Blessings Bestowed upon the Members of it, &c.—Zion for the Millennium—Gathering of the House of Israel, and the Restoration of the Priesthood to them—Second Advent of Christ—Resurrection of the Dead—Millennium, &c., &c.

THE subject of the "Book of Mormon," or the evidence by which it is sustained, is immediately connected with the one that is briefly discoursed upon in the preceding chapter; therefore, in this I only continue the subject, in order to give the reader a correct, and general idea of the majestic work that the Lord has promised to perform in the latter-days.

It would be unreasonable for me to attempt, to present to the reader all the evidence that there is to sustain the authenticity of this Book, in the narrow space that I have in this work to devote to it: for it would require volumes larger than this to contain it; therefore, I shall only present in a very brief manner, some of the most important parts of it.—But I will first give a historical sketch of the manner in which it was discovered; of what people it is a history, and of the doctrine it inculcates.

This Book was discovered to Mr. Joseph Smith, about A. D., 1827, by the agency of an angel: from this to 1830, he

occupied a good portion of his time in translating it, in which year it was published to the world. It contains a history of a people that were Israelites of the tribe of Joseph, who emigrated from Jerusalem to this continent about six hundred years before Christ. The account runs thus. A short time before the Babylonish captivity, the Lord commanded a man by the name of Lehi, who was a righteous or just person, to lead his own family, and another one by the name of Ishmael, out of Jerusalem, promising them, that He would direct them to a choice and good land. This command was obeyed, and the company at length reached the shore of the ocean, where they were directed by the Lord to build a ship of sufficient dimensions to transport them over the sea. After every thing was made ready, they set sail, and in a reasonable length of time, they safely landed upon this land. Lehi had several sons; but soon after they came here a separation took place between them, and in process of time they became two powerful nations, who were called Lamanites and Nephites; the former took their name from Laman the eldest son of Lehi; and the latter, from Nephi his third son. The Lamanites were a stubborn and warlike people, and of a roving disposition; the present aborigines of this continent, are their progeny. The Nephites were agriculturists, and a civilized people, who built splendid cities; and also, large temples and spacious edifices, in which they held public worship. The remains of these cities and temples, are to be seen in Central America, and elsewhere, in both the north and south parts of the continent; the discovery of which has excited the curiosity and astonishment of the learned so much of late.

The Nephites at times were faithful to God, at others, they were rebellious. The Book of Mormon, is an abridgement of the writings of the prophets, and good men of this people, and gives an account of their religion, some of their revelations, their wars with the Lamanites, and also their final

overthrow as a nation. But the manner in which this book was preserved, is as follows.

In the latter part of the fourth century, the Nephites began to rapidly degenerate into apostacy, and the Lord foreseeing their final destruction, commanded Mormon, who was one of their prophets, to collect together the sacred writings of their former prophets, and to compile them, and engrave an abridgement of them upon metallic plates or tablets, (which was the material they used for writing upon). He however, was slain by his enemies before the completion of this work; consequently, it fell into the hands of his Son Moroni, who saw the entire destruction of the Nephites by the hands of the Lamanites; and also finished writing or engraving this work, and then prepared a safe and convenient place, in which he deposited it with the expectation, and indeed, with a promise from the Lord, that it should be brought to light in the latter-days, for an important purpose.

This record was deposited in an archive prepared for it on a hill that was anciently called Cumora, now in the township of Manchester, Ontario county, New York; where it remained in safety, until it was discovered to Mr. Smith, as I have already mentioned, who translated it into the English language, by the means of the *Urim and Thummim*, (a similar instrument to the one that is mentioned in the former part of this work,) and the power of God. For other particulars concerning the manner in which this Book has been brought before the public, I refer the reader to the Book itself, and other works in which an elaborate account of the whole transaction is given.

This Book contains no new code of morals nor any new gospel or doctrine; but in this respect perfectly harmonizes with the bible. It however, contains several prophecies concerning the work of the Lord in the latter-days, that are new and interesting to us, yet they do not conflict with the bible.

The historical part of it, differs from that of the bible, because it is a history of a different nation or branch of the house of Israel.

The utility of this Book, or rather, the objects, the Lord had in view in bringing it to light, are as follow. First, it reveals or brings to light many important things that were before hid in the labyrinth of mystery and darkness, which will help to fill up the library of sacred intelligence, that is to deluge the earth, as the water does the sea. Secondly, it reveals an important fact, which is that the aborigines of this continent are Israelites, so that when the fishers and hunters, that Jeremiah mentions, are sent to gather Israel, may know that they are a branch of this people. Isaiah says, that when the Lord shall make an everlasting covenant with the house of Israel: "Their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: and all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed that the Lord hath blessed."* Many of the Israelites are mixed with the Gentiles; therefore, how are they to be designated, so that the Gentiles shall know that they are of that race? I reply, that the only way of doing it, is by revelation from the Lord. Indëed, the Book of Mormon, is intended to be of particular benefit to the Red men of the forest: for it will in the due time of the Lord, be taken to them; and thus they shall have a knowledge of their origin, and many prophecies that relate to their conversion, which with the attendant power of God, will have a most desirable effect upon them, and cause them to lay down their weapons of warfare, and to engage in the service of God. Thirdly, this Book contains the testimony of a nation or people that inhabited this land, who affirm that Christ is the Son of God or true Messiah. This people at the time this testimony was written, were secluded from the oriental nations, without any means of communication, which

* Is. lxi. 8. 9.

rendered it impossible for them to form any collusion ; therefore, as the Book of Mormon is well authenticated, by not only scriptural and internal evidence, but by the testimony of thousands of living witnesses, who are persons of undoubted veracity, when the servants of God go to Israel, and even to the heathen nations that do not believe in Christ, it will be of great service to them, because it and the bible contain the testimony of two nations widely separated from each other, agreeing to one thing, and that is, to the truth of the Christian religion : “ By the mouth of two or three witnesses, shall every word be established.” Certainly, the testimony of two nations, is better than one, especially when they perfectly agree. In a word, the effect that this Book is intended to have, is this, it is to be an instrument in the hand of God, to convince Israel, and others, that Christ is the true Messiah, and to cause Zion’s watchmen to see eye to eye, and all the honest followers of Christ to believe, know, see, and practice alike. And any person, who says that a belief in it tends to, or even does, have any other effect upon its advocates than the above, shamefully misrepresents it. Other causes may influence individuals to do wrong ; but such causes, are abstract from the bible, or Book of Mormon.

The following are the principal objections that are urged against this work ; first, that it contains a new gospel ; but every person that has ever read this Book, knows this to be false ; therefore, it is no objection, because it is founded upon nothing but an imagination. Secondly, that the bible contains all the revelations, and inspired writings that God ever intended the human family should have ; or in other words, that the canon of the scriptures is full ; therefore, we need no more. This idea, is one of the greatest pieces of ignorance and bigotry, that pretended Christians, have ever favoured us with. Whoever has carefully read the scriptures, knows that the prophets, and apostles, refer to several inspired books

that are not in the bible ; such, for instance, as the Book of Gad the Seer, of Nathan the prophet, of Shemeiah the prophet, Visions of Iddo the Seer, &c., &c. Indeed, if we credit the scriptures, we must believe that God never gave any unnecessary revelations, and also, that but a portion of them have been perpetuated to us ; therefore, the idea that the bible contains all the sacred writings that God intends His people shall ever possess, is only fit for a bigot to amuse a silly multitude with. Thirdly, it is argued from the following, that no revelations were to be given after the days of the apostles : “ For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall *add* unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.”* John only refers to his Book of Revelation, and not to the bible : for at this time, the New Testament writings were not compiled ; and it is probable that he had never seen them all. If he by this expression debarred God of the privilege of giving a revelation, or any person of the right of receiving one, and of writing by inspiration, then the curse must have fallen upon himself ; for it is a historical fact, that he wrote his three Epistles, and Gospel, after this. But if we adopt this as a rule by which we reject all revelations, and inspired writings after John, then by the same rule, we must discard nearly all the bible : for both Moses and Solomon, have given a similar commandment.† The Book of Mormon, is no addition to John’s Revelation ; but like any other book, it is independent by itself ; therefore, it does not in the least conflict with John. Certainly, there are no reasonable objections against this Book to be found : men may fancy them ; but they are instantaneously put to flight, when the brilliancy of truth is brought to bear upon them, like the rebellious rabble before the mighty host of warriors.

* Re. xxii, 18. † See De. iv, 2: and Pro. xxx, 6.

Now the contents of this Book, are not so much objected to, as the miraculous manner in which it was brought to light, and indeed, this is the uniform objection that has ever been urged against all the great and marvellous works of God: for it is the disposition of man, to credit a thing so far as God has nothing to do with it; but when it borders on the miraculous, then it becomes odious to him: for this reason, the Greek philosophers regarded the idea of the resurrection of Christ as foolishness. Again, the Jews at times found no particular difficulty in believing in the prophets, and their testimony, who were dead and gone; but with wanton cruelty, they oppressed, and persecuted those that were cotemporary with them. Christ and His disciples were dispised in their day; but now it is a disgrace not to believe in them. But if God should send an apostle or prophet, to the Christian world in this our day, he would meet with scorn, and abuse from every quarter. Indeed, if the apostle Paul who has so many fine chapels and churches named after him, should disguise his person, appear and preach the same doctrine, believe in immediate revelation, the administration of angels, exhort the people to contend for the same spiritual gifts, and to earnestly contend for the same faith, in our own times, that he did in his day, he would be denied the privilege of even standing upon their steps, much less in their fine pulpits, to proclaim his sentiments.

Again, we are very apt to say that God done many marvellous works some thousands of years ago, and will perhaps, do the like at some period hence; but nothing of the kind in our day or generation. But why not these things be done in our time, if the occasion calls for them, as well as before or after? Reader, let us lay aside all our bigotry, our superstition, our prejudice, our creeds, our delusions, our sectarianism, our fears, our unbelief, and our partyisms, and thus untrammel our sober senses; and then, under the con-

sideration that God is the same in all ages, our reply to the above question will be, that it is just as reasonable for us to believe that God will do such things now as at any other time, and that a belief in the present, and immediate performance of these things, should be no more difficult for our capacities to digest than in those past or future. But now add to this the incontestible fact, that God has foretold by His prophets that in the latter-days, He would do a miraculous or majestic work, and where is any room left for doubt.—But now for the evidence by which this work is sustained, a synopsis of which, I intend to give.

Now the most important class of evidence by which the authenticity of this work is established, is the predictions of the prophets, relative to a thing of the kind. When we succeed in adducing an overwhelming amount of testimony of this character, then all that will remain to be authenticated, is whether or not this Book, is the one the prophets allude to, or a forgery, which can only be determined by its effects, also by circumstances, its internal evidence, and the testimony of living witnesses; when all these return a verdict in its favour, then it is established beyond successful contradiction, and entitled to the full confidence of the community. But slander, sarcasm, disgusting epithets, shameful misrepresentation, traducing of character, persecution, mobs, wanton denunciations from the pulpit, the cry of delusion, fanaticism, Mormonism, false prophets, and imposture, is no argument to countermand anything that is sustained by the above evidence.—But I must hasten.

In order to sustain the authenticity of this Book, I shall first prove that America was inhabited by a civilized nation more than a thousand years ago; secondly, that this people together with the Indians of the forest, were and are, the progeny of Joseph; thirdly, that it was not only their privilege to receive revelations from the Lord and write them, but

that they did do it; fourthly, that these sacred writings were to be preserved, and be brought forth by the power of God, and be instrumental in commencing His great work, which shall effect the restoration of the house of Israel.

The recent discoveries of American antiquities, such as the remains of once splendid cities, spacious temples and edifices, an extensive quantity of hieroglyphics, catacombs, obelisks, aqueducts, viaducts, &c., &c., is sufficient to convince any rational person that a nation existed upon this continent anterior to its discovery by Columbus, who were enlightened, and understood arts and sciences to no inconsiderable extent; however, this is a matter of public notoriety, and admitted by all the learned of the age. A celebrated writer, speaking of the antiquity of one of these cities that lies near Palenque, remarks: "In surveying its ruins, the traveller is led to believe that it was founded at as early a period as the renowned cities of Egypt." "The antiquity of this city is manifest not only from its nameless hieroglyphics and other objects; but from the age of some of the trees growing over the buildings where once the hum of industry and voice of merriment were heard. The concentric circles of some of these trees were counted, which showed that they were more than nine hundred years of age." Again, if this people possessed the power, or understood the art of writing their thoughts, it is quite probable that they wrote a history of their national affairs, if not of their religion.—But I shall now show that they were Israelites.

The reader will doubtless remember that it was customary with the ancient patriarchs previous to their death, to collect their children together, and lay their hands upon them, and bless them with a patriarchal blessing, and predict what was to befall them, and their posterity in future ages. For this purpose, Jacob collected his twelve sons around him, and blessed them as above; but when he placed his hands upon

Joseph's head, he said: "Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall: The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him; but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:) Even by the God of thy father who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breast and of the womb: the blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors, unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separated from his brethren."* It must be admitted that this blessing relates to a temporal inheritance, as well as to the blessing of heaven; but we will examine it specifically; first, Joseph was to be like a bough by a well and his branches or posterity were to run over the wall. This is a comparison to show the fruitfulness of Joseph, and that his branches should become numerous, and extend over some supposed limits or given boundary; but match with this what David says about Joseph, whom he also, compares to a vine, and it makes the subject plain. "Thou prepardest room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like goodly cedars; she sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches into the river."† From this we learn that the tribe of Joseph, after they were located in the land of Canaan, were to increase to an astonishing rate, and their branches to extend beyond the given boundary of their inheritance in that land, and reach unto the sea; also that his blessing prevailed above or was greater, and reached beyond the blessing of Jacob's ancestors, who

* Ge. xlix, 22—26. † Ps. lxxx, 9—11.

were Abraham, and Isaac, and the inheritance they ceded to him as a blessing, was the land of Canaan. Indeed, it is abundantly evident that Joseph was to have a land, not only beyond Canaan, but one larger than it is. Furthermore, his blessing, or rather his branches in fulfilment of it the above, were to extend to the utmost bound or most distant hills, (of course from where Jacob then stood.) Thus we discover, that the branches of Joseph were to extend, or emigrate to the most distant hills of the earth. The foregoing is a prophetic history of Joseph's progeny, which traces them to Canaan where they became numerous, and from thence, branches of them extended to the most distant part of the earth, where they have inhabited the land, that Jacob promised them, which is even greater than that which was given to him by his fathers.

Now this prophecy must apply to America, its ancient inhabitants, and present aborigines; for the most obvious reason, it cannot be with any propriety applied any where else. But we will now turn back to the xlviii chap. of Genesis, in which we shall find something that is still more positive.—Jacob blessed Joseph's sons, and thus predicted what should happen to them or their posterity in future ages: "And now thy two sons Ephraim and Manasseh," "are mine: as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine." "And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly." "And he blessed Joseph and said," "the angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; *and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.*" "And Joseph said unto his father, not so, my father; for this is the first born; put thy right hand upon his head. And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know

it : he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great ; but truly his yonger brother shall be greater than he, *and his seed shall become a multitude of nations.*" When we put the sense of the above together, we discover that Ephraim and Manassah, *were to grow into a multitude of nations in the midst of the earth.* Now let the learned search from one extremity of the earth to the other, to find where this prophecy has been fulfilled, and when they are done, they will be obliged to admit that nothing of the kind ever transpired upon any part of the Old world. Indeed, Jacob aptly describes the present condition of the American Indians : for they are divided into several hundred different tribes or nations ; in a word, they are a multitude of nations in the midst of the earth.

It is said in the v. chap. of 1 Chro., that in consequence of the transgression of Reuben, the birth-right fell to the sons of Joseph ; therefore, Jacob named his name upon them, commit them to the charge of his guardian angel, and conferred the greatest blessing upon them, with regard to a temporal inheritance ; and certainly, under the consideration that Joseph was to have a land even larger than Canaan at the extremity of the earth, is not the evidence conclusive, that this delightful land, is a land of promise to the progeny of Joseph.

Moses while blessing this tribe, or rather while prophecying concerning them, says : " Blessed of the Lord be his land, for the precious things of heaven, and for the precious fruits of the earth," &c.* The prophet Hosea speaking of the children of Ephraim says : " When the Lord shall roar, they shall tremble from the *west.*"† This at once settles the point, that the Ephraimites were to inhabit a land somewhere west of Palestine ; but we cannot find them in any age as a multitude of nations, either in Europe or Africa ; hence, the

* See De. xxxiii, 13—17. † Ho. xi, 10

rational conclusion must follow, which is that the foregoing predictions relate to a branch of the tribe of Joseph upon this continent.

Christ said on a certain occasion : " I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." This shows that His mission in person was exclusively to the Israelites. But with a view of executing it, He said at another time : " And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold : them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice ; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."* Some suppose that this alludes to the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles ; but this cannot be : for this reason, Christ was to visit the people that He alluded to in person, and they were to hear His voice. The Book of Mormon accounts for this singular declaration by recording the fact, that Christ after His resurrection, visited the people upon this continent, proclaimed to them the same gospel that He did to the Jews, commissioned individuals to preach it to the people throughout the land, and to establish His church. Thus the people upon this land, and the primitive Christians of the Old world, had one universal fold, and but one shepherd. One of the prophets, while speaking of the glorious effects of the work of the Lord in the latter-days, says : " From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my supplants, even the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering."† In the preceding chapter, we settled the point with regard to the land that lies beyond the rivers of Ethiopia ; therefore, I only add, that the above alludes to the Israelites upon this continent.—But according to promise, I will now prove that the above people received revelations from the Lord.

Paul said in his discourse to the Athenians " And [God] hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth, (*of course America not*

* Jno. x. 16. † Zeph. iii, 10.

excepted;) and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if hapily they might feel after Him, and find Him though He be not far from every one of us.”* It is plain from this, that it is the privilege of all nations to seek after the Lord, and find Him, or to receive immediate information from Him. But I again cite the reader to Jacob’s prediction concerning the posterity of Joseph, in which he said, that God would bless them with the blessings of heaven. Moses makes a similar declaration, which must allude to the Spirit of prophecy, and other Spiritual blessings which they were to receive. The gospel is certainly a precious thing from heaven.

Now if this people received the Spirit of prophecy, it was their privilege to write their predictions, which they most certainly did do: for Hosea, speaking of the Ephraimites by the Spirit of prophecy, says: “I have written to him the great things of my law; but they were counted as a strange thing.”† This is indeed very plain:—as I have before observed, the Book of Mormon is intended to particularly benefit the Ephraimites or aborigines of this continent; and it is surely regarded as a very strange thing. But, admitting this people had a sacred record as I have before intimated, the question now is, whether or not it was to be preserved and brought to light in the last days? David says: “The words of the Lord are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation forever.”‡

The following is definite: Ezekiel after describing a vision that he had of the resurrection of the dead, commences a new subject by saying: “The word of the Lord came again unto me, saying, morcover thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, for Judah, and for the children of

* Ac xvii, 26, 27. † Ho. viii, 12. ‡ Ps. xii, 6, 7.

Israel his companions: then take another stick and write upon it, for Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions: and join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand: and when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, wilt thou not show us what thou meanest by these? say unto them, thus saith the Lord God, behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and they shall be one in mine hand.”* In order to understand the above, the reader should keep in mind, that the prophet in several of the preceding chapters wholly dwells upon the subject of the restoration of Israel, and the ushering in of the Millennium; but in this, he tells how it was to commence.—First, he was commanded to present to his brethren two sticks with writings upon them, one for Judah, and the other for Joseph in the hands of Ephraim; and when we consider that it was an ancient custom of the Jews to write their works upon parchments, and roll them upon sticks, we conclude that these must be regarded as samples which represent two important books or writings. Then follows the prediction, which explains the matter. “Thus saith the Lord God, behold, I will take the stick of Joseph which is in the hand of Ephraim, and place it with the stick of Judah and they shall become one in mine hand.” The stick of Judah evidently stands for the bible, and that of Joseph for the Book of Mormon; and mark, the latter was to be brought forth by the power of God, and placed with the former. In a word, this Book has been brought to light in exact fulfilment of this prophecy, and is one, or agrees with the bible, as far as testimony to important truths and doctrine, is concerned

* Eze. xxxvii, 15—19

The prophet continues the subject as follows : " Thus saith the Lord God, behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land : And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel ; and one king shall be king to them all, and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms, any more at all." Indeed, it is plain from this, that the union of the two sticks or books, was to be the commencement of the work, that will ultimately effect the gathering of Israel. How completely this agrees with all that is said, in the preceding chapter.—The stone of the mountain was to commence its motion upon this land. The ensign of the Lord was to be raised here, His kingdom organized, and His ambassadors or messengers, were also to be sent from the same place. This Book, as I infer from the foregoing, was to come forth here as the commencement of this majestic work of God, and be an instrument in His hand, to do much towards the accomplishment of His purposes. Surely, all these prophecies form a connected chain of testimony that cannot be broken, for all agree to one thing.—But more of this hereafter.

It is plain from what Ezekiel says in the latter part of the above chapter, that this is a work of the last days ; for he says, that when Israel are gathered, one king shall rule over them, and that they shall never be divided or dispersed again, neither shall they sin nor defile themselves any more forever ; also that God shall make an everlasting covenant with them, and that His tabernacle and sanctuary shall be in the midst of them forevermore. Certainly, no intelligent person will pretend to say all of this has been fulfilled.

David while speaking of the restoration of the house of Israel, thus observes : " Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth

shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven. Yea, the Lord shall give that which is good: and our land shall yield her increase. Righteousness shall go before Him, and shall set us in the way of His steps.”* Christ said: “Sanctify them through thy *truth*, thy *word* is *truth*,” thus the *word* of the Lord and *truth* are synonymous; therefore, we learn from the above that *truth* was to spring up out of the earth, and heaven at the same time be propitious: and that which was to immediately follow, is the setting of Israel in the way of the Lord’s steps. In short, in the above, the Psalmist aptly describes the Book of Mormon.

We will now turn to the xxix chap. of Isaiah, which is certainly very conclusive upon this important subject.—He first speaks of the destruction of Jerusalem, which he uses as a comparison to show what awful calamities, and judgments, will come upon the nations that fight against Zion: (he here alludes to the Zion of the latter-days.) He then describes the condition the of Jews and Gentiles, after the above destruction, down to this day, thus: “Stay yourselves and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink. For the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath He covered.” This is a very accurate description of the condition of both the Jews and Gentiles at the present time. They are drunk with their own folly, and superstition, they also deny immediate revelation or inspiration; therefore, the Lord has ceased to raise up prophets among them, and in a word, a spiritual darkness hovers over them, comparatively like that of Egypt, or as the prophet says: “Darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people.” But in the midst of this darkness, or rather at the time it reigned so pre-

* Ps. lxxxv, 10—13.

dominant, this astonishing Book was to be brought forth, as follows: "And the vision of all is become unto you as *the words of a book that is sealed* which men deliver to one that is learned, saying read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot for it is sealed: *and the book* is delivered to him that is not learned, saying read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned. Wherefore the Lord said, forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouths, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their hearts far from me, (this has been a common complaint against the Jews, not only in the days of Christ but ever since,) and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." All that I have to say about the above prediction, is that the Book of Mormon has been brought to light in exact fulfilment of it, and that it is the commencement of a marvellous, and wonderful work of God, which shall produce the following astonishing effects. "The deaf shall hear the words of this Book, the blind shall see out of obscurity, and darkness; the meek shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel;" the house of Israel are to be redeemed or converted to the Lord, so that they shall "sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and fear the God of Israel:" and to crown the climax, this Book is to cause "those that err in spirit to come to understanding, and those that murmur to learn doctrine."

Any person who will carefully read the Book of Mormon, will find internal evidence, (I mean positive predictions that are being fulfilled daily,) that is sufficient to entitle it to the credit of the most incredulous. But for the testimony of living witnesses, I refer the reader to the latter part of the Book itself, where you will find as definite an affirma-

tion to the truth of the work, as the prophets and apostles ever made in attestation of the important truths which they proclaimed.

Soon after this Book was discovered, the Lord sent His angel with the Holy priesthood, which was conferred upon Mr. Smith, and O. Cowdery who as a scribe assisted in the work of translation: they immediately baptized each other, and also others that believed the work. On the sixth day of April, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty; the church, which then consisted of but six members, was organized. Some of these were ordained to the ministry, who immediately commenced proclaiming the fullness of the everlasting gospel, baptizing, and organizing branches of the church. Indeed, the work commenced to spread rapidly, and has continued to do so ever since, and thousands have been gathered into the fold of Christ, not only in the United States; but in the Canadas, England, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, and elsewhere.

As soon as the church was organized as above, the Lord began to bestow His Holy Spirit upon the faithful; and some were blessed with the ministry of angels, others had heavenly visions, the sick were healed, and evil spirits cast out by faith in the name of Christ. Indeed, the Lord has not only restored the priesthood; but the gifts of the Spirit, and blessings of the gospel of peace.

As respects the officers of the church,—I will here say, that they correspond in every particular with those of primitive times; and in a word, God has restored the ancient order of His kingdom, and commenced to prepare the way for His second advent.—But as prophetic declarations concerning the establishment of Zion for the Millennium abound throughout the scriptures, I deem it prudent to make a few observations upon the same, in order to do honour to the cause of God, and to connect the subject-matter of my history together.

The Psalmist says: "Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea the set time, is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and the favour of the dust thereof." "*When the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His glory.*" "This shall be written for the generation to come, and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord."* The Mount Zion at Jerusalem, was in existence at the time David wrote this psalm; therefore, he must refer to some other Zion besides it; for the appearance of the Lord in His glory is yet in the future. Christ speaks of His coming in great glory, and with His angels, at the end of the world. John, while speaking of things that he saw in the future, says: "I saw the Lamb of God standing upon Mount Zion with a hundred and forty-four thousand of His saints," &c.: and mark David says, "when the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His glory;" hence I contend that he alludes to a Zion that shall be built up just before Christ comes. The saying, "this shall be written for a generation to come," &c., corroborates this idea. David, speaking of this city in another place, says: "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King."† Again, he speaks of this city as being located somewhere in the fields of the wood or wilderness.‡ I have before proved that the xviii chap. of Isaiah, is addressed to this continent; and as he speaks of the establishment of Zion in connection with the setting up of the *ensign of the Lord*, I infer that this land is the place where it shall be located. But according to David, it is to situated on the sides of the north; match this with what Isaiah says, and then it is plain, that Zion is to be located somewhere in North America. What is said about the fields of the wood, is an exact description of the natural fields, or the beautiful

* Ps. cii, 13—18. † Ps. xlviii, 2. ‡ Ps. cxxxii, 6.

prairies that abound in the central part of the continent; therefore, I conclude that Zion is to be located near the center of North America. It is said in the Book of Mormon, that Zion or the New Jerusalem, shall be built upon this land.

Now the matter stands thus, the Jews or tribe of Judah and others, will return to Palestine, and rebuild Jerusalem, which is situated near the center of the eastern continent; but upon this, the Lord will cause the New Jerusalem or Zion to be built, to which the tribe of Joseph and the saints that receive the gospel among the Gentiles, will gather or emigrate. Joel, speaking of the great and notable day of the Lord, says: "In Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, there shall be deliverance for those that call upon the name of the Lord." Thus these cities will be places of refuge or safety for the saints, when the Lord pours out His fury upon Babylon the Great, and the wicked in general.

The following shows that Zion and Jerusalem, were to be located upon two separate lands: "For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof, as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name. Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Thou shalt no more be termed forsaken: neither shall thy land any more be termed desolate; but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah; for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married."* Now it is said, that when the Lord created the earth, He gathered the waters unto one place; therefore, the earth could not have been split up into islands and continents, as it now is. It is also said,

that in the days of Peleg, the earth, (not the human family,) was divided. It is probable that in his day some mighty convulsion of the earth took place, which rent it in twain; but when Christ comes there will be a general time of restoration; consequently, the two continents will be brought together, and thus the land of Zion, will be joined to the land of Jerusalem. Indeed, prophetic declarations about this Zion, abound throughout the writings of the prophets; but for the want of room, I am obliged to omit inserting them.

I presume the reader is by this time, convinced that America is a promised land to the tribe of Joseph; therefore, the mountains of this land are the mountains of Israel, as much so, as those of Canaan; and if any of the Israelites should gather to Zion, they would not do that which would in any respect conflict with what Ezekiel says, about Israel being made one nation upon the *mountains* of Israel. In short, the Lord's *ensign* was to be raised, the Book of Mormon or a record of the tribe of Joseph brought forth here, and Zion is also to be located here; and I shall now prove that the Lord will make instruments of this tribe, particularly the Ephraimites, to accomplish His work in the latter-days.

The Lord says through David: "Ephraim, is the strength of my head; Judah is my lawgiver." Hosea says: "Ephraim hath mixed himself among the people." It appears from the above, that the tribe of Ephraim, with the exception of the aborigines of this country, have been scattered and mixed with the Gentiles; but the Lord can designate them from others; therefore, He will bring them into His kingdom, and make them His ministers, and thus regard them as the strength of His head. The following demonstrates this: "His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to (or from) the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they

are the thousands of Manasseh.”* Thus the tribe of Joseph are to be instrumental in gathering the saints of God together, from the ends of the earth. This tribe have never as yet done a work of this kind; therefore, it is in the future. Jeremiah in the xxxi chap. of his prophecy, says: “For there shall be a day, that the watchmen upon the Mount Ephraim shall cry, arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the Lord our God. For thus saith the Lord, sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O Lord, save thy people, the remnant of Israel. Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither. They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble; for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first-born.” The idea is that when the Lord gathers all Israel, the tribe of Ephraim will be the first-born, because they will receive the gospel first, or be inducted into the kingdom of God, and thus be born of Him. The reader will do well to carefully examine the remainder of the above chapter, for it is most sublime upon the restoration of Israel.

Paul writes about the restoration of Israel, thus: “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, there shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.”† It must be admitted that the apostle here alludes to the

* De. xxxiii, 17. † Ro. xi, 25—27.

gathering of Israel, and the restoration of the kingdom to them : and the Deliverer that is to turn ungodliness from them includes not only Christ, but the work that He is the author of, that was to commence in Zion, or upon this land. Again, there are several passages in the bible which intimate that Christ will appear to His people in Zion, as He did to the apostles after His resurrection, and do something that will give His work an astonishing impetus ; perhaps, He will endow His servants with great power, just before they are sent to Israel.

The prophet speaking in the name of the Lord of Israel, after their restoration, says : “ And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin : and I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning.”* Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and others, who were priests of the Lord were the judges and counsellors of Israel at the beginning ; therefore, I infer that when the Lord restores the kingdom to Israel, He will raise up prophets, and priests among them. Isaiah says, in another place : “ And I will set a *sign* among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory ; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles. And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord, out of all nations, upon horses and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord. And I will also *take of them for priests and for Levites*, saith the Lord. For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name re-

* Is. i, 25, 26.

main.”* In the above, we are not only informed of the manner the house of Israel will be gathered; but that the Lord will cause many of them to be ordained as priests and Levites, which shows that the fulness of the priesthood will be restored to them, even to the Aaronic order of it.

Isaiah in another place, speaking of the restoration of Israel, and the rebuilding of Jerusalem, says: “And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations. And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the aliens, shall be your ploughmen, and your vine-dressers. But ye shall be named the priests of the Lord; men shall call you the ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall you boast yourselves.”† Can any reasonable person, after reading the above, dispute that the Lord will restore the kingdom to Israel, and in a word, make them a kingdom of priests? Moses intimates that it was the intention of the Lord in his day, to do this; but it appears, that in consequence of their wickedness, it has been deferred until they shall be restored to their lands and receive Christ as their Messiah.

Jeremiah in the xxxiii chap. of his prophecy, dwells largely upon the restoration of Israel, and says: “And I will cure them, and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth. And I will cause the captivity of Judah, and the captivity of Israel, to return, and will build them as at first. And will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me.” “For thus saith the Lord, David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel.” We learn from the above, that the Lord will not only gather Israel; but will restore the kingdom unto them, and that a descendant of David shall reign over

* Is. lxvi, 19—22. † Is lxi, 4—6.

them forever. The prophet continues the subject by saying, that the Levitical order of priests shall be perpetuated. Malachi, speaking of the coming of Christ, says: "He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness."*

Jeremiah says, that the Lord shall make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and Judah; and after it, he says: "They shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and and I will remember their sin no more."† Some suppose this covenant took effect with Israel, at the opening of the Christian dispensation, because the apostle Paul refers to it in his epistle to the Hebrews; but whoever will carefully examine the whole of this epistle, will discover, that he reasons to countermand a certain idea of the Jews, which is, that there was to be no other order of worship or of religion, except that which is set forth in the Mosaic economy. Paul refers to this covenant to prove that there was to be a new order, or that there was to be some change; but he does not say, that it took effect in his day. Certainly, nothing is more evident from the prophets, than that this new covenant will take effect at the time the house of Israel are restored, and they receive Christ as their Messiah.

Ezekiel is plain upon this point: "As I live, saith the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you: and I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with stretched out arm, and with fury poured out; and I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and

* Mal. iii, 3. † Je. xxxi, 34.

there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord God. And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant.”* Now we learn from the above, that the Lord will not only gather the house of Israel, but that He will display His mighty power in the performance of miracles; and also, that He will plead or converse with them face to face as He did with their fathers, and surely no person will say, that this has been fulfilled.

It is evident from the prophets, that all the saints will be gathered together before Christ comes, whether they be Jews or Gentiles by descent. Isaiah in the lx chap. of his prophecy, speaking of the establishment of Zion, says: “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. And thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.” “Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows? Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the Lord thy God.” “And they shall call thee, the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.” It is plain from the above that many of the Gentiles will come to Zion, and bring their wealth with them to build up the city,

* Eze. xx, 33–37.

and make it ready to receive Christ. The prophet continues the subject by speaking of this city and the glory of it, in the Millennium, when the Lord shall dwell in it, and also, be the light of it.

The prophet in another place, speaking of the gathering of the saints, says; "Fear not; for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north give up; and to the south, keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; even *every* one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory."* Jeremiah says: "Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the Lord, neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid. For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee; but I will correct thee in measure and will not leave thee altogether unpunished:"† It appears from the above, that about the time the Lord gathers Israel, He will destroy all the nations, among whom they have been dispersed. Christ said, that the Jews should be "carried captive into all nations;" and indeed, to what nation could we go at the present time where we should not find Jews: consequently, I infer that it is necessary for all the saints to be identified with Israel; or in other words, to be adopted into the family of Abraham, and thus be gathered and numbered with them, in order to escape the calamities that God will bring upon the wicked.

There are many more passages that are explicit upon the great work of the Lord in the Latter-Days; or in other words, upon the important subjects that are before dis-

* Is. xliii, 5-7. † Jo. xxx, 10, 11.

coursed upon; but for the want of room, I will only refer to those which I have not already quoted or referred to, that the reader may, without any inconvenience, examine them at leisure.—See Ps. 1, 4, 5 : Is. ii, ch : Mi. iv, ch : Is. iv, ch : Do. xxviii, 21, 22 : Do. xxxv, ch : Do. xl, 1—10 : Do. xlii, 9—14 : Do. lii, ch : Do. liv, 11—17 : Je. iii, 16—18 : Do. iv, 6, 7 : Do. xxiii, 3—8 : Do. xxx, ch : Do. xxxii, 37—42 : Do. xlvi, 27, 28 : Eze. xxxiv, 23—31 : Do. xxxvi, ch : Ho. iii, 4, 5 : Joel, ii, 15—32 : Do. iii, ch : Am. ix, 8—15 : Zep. iii, 8—21 : Zec. i, 14—17 : Do. ii, ch : Do. viii, 1—8 : Do. x, ch : Do. xii, 5—13 : Do. xiv, ch.

As soon as the house of Israel are restored, Christ will come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, subject the earth unto Himself, and then reign over His people as King of kings, and Lord of lords. Indeed, the second advent of Christ, has been the theme of all the patriarchs, prophets, and saints, in all ages of the world, and should even now, be regarded as a matter of major importance to all Christians: for it is a doctrine; or in other words, it is a sure promise that administers consolation to all the faithful, and sincere lovers of the truth; but as there are different opinions with regard to the manner in which He will come, and the work to be accomplished at the time, I deem it necessary to offer a few remarks upon the same.

Some contend that He will not come personally, but spiritually, and reign in the hearts of His people; and thus produce a millennium, and fulfill the numerous passages that allude to the above important event. Nothing however is more evident to me, from the scriptures, than that Christ will come personally or literally to the earth.—The following makes this matter plain: “And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven, as He went up, behold, two men

stood by them in white apparel ; which also said, ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven ? ' This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.'* Now if it is a fact, which but few pretend to dispute, that Christ ascended to heaven personally ; hence, according to the above it must necessarily follow, that He will come in the same manner.

It appears that after the Jews are gathered back to Jerusalem, and have rebuilt it, that many nations will collect their forces, and besiege the city, and succeed in taking one half of it ; but at this moment the heavens will be unveiled, and Christ will thus appear : " Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east ; and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west ; and there shall be a very great valley : and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains ; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal : yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah ; and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee"† (or Him.) It is plain from this, that Christ will come and stand upon the place, where the apostles last saw Him. The prophet continues the subject by describing the universal kingdom of God, and the glorious day, when righteousness and peace shall cover the earth. He says : " And the Lord shall be king over all the earth : in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one."

Malachi says : " Behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts ; but who may abide the day of His coming ? and who

* Ac. i, 9—11. † Zec. xiv, 3—5.

shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap."* He also, while speaking of this most eventful day in another place, says: "Then shall ye discern between the righteous and the wicked: between him that serveth God, and him that serveth Him not.† For behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name, shall the Son of righteousness arise with healing in His wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as the calves of the stall."‡ Thus we discover that when Christ comes, He will destroy the wicked, and triumphantly establish His kingdom, in which the saints shall shine forth like the stars of heaven.

Some contend that Christ came at the time Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman army; but this is most certainly a mistake; for whoever will carefully read John's Revelation, which was written more than twenty years after the above destruction, will read of this notable event, and things connected with it, that we know, are yet in the future. Christ, speaking of His coming, said: "And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."§ How striking the contrast:—Christ said that at this time, "the tribes of the earth shall mourn, and that their hearts shall fail them for fear," &c. John says at this time, the kings of the earth, the captains, the great men, the rich, &c., shall call for the rocks of the mountains to fall on them, and hide them from the presence of the Lamb. But on the other hand, the saints will rejoice, and hail the day or hour with gladness, knowing that the time of their redemption

* Mal. iii, 1, 2. † Mal. iii, 18. ‡ Mal. iv, 1, 2. § Lu. xxi, 27, 28.

is at hand ; therefore reader, how important it is, that we should be prepared for this awful, yet glorious day. It is true, we know not the day nor the year : for Christ intimated, that He will come when the world at large, are not expecting Him, for said He : " As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not till the flood came, and took them all away ; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." The Saints of course will be looking for His appearance ; and those who are truly faithful, will have their lamps trimmed and burning, so that when the voice of the Bridegroom is heard, they will go out to meet Him with joy, and not with grief : on the other hand, those who are not prepared for the awful crisis, with the utmost consternation and horrible dread, will receive the sad news, depart from me ye wicked, ye cannot enter into my rest :

Paul, speaking of this eventful day, says : " But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, peace and safety ; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child ; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are the children of light, and the children of the day : we are not of the night, nor of darkness."* Indeed, it is evident the saints will anticipate His coming, and know from the signs that will precede it, that it is nigh at hand. But admitting, that we shall be called from time to eternity, before this day arrives, we should by no means slacken our faithfulness to the Lord : for if we are worthy, when He comes, He will call

us out of our tombs, and cause us to share in the delight, and happiness of the day.

Again, the fact that when our Saviour comes, all the saints, prophets, and apostles, shall be raised from the dead, or have a glorious resurrection, adds lustre and interest to this subject, and makes it a doctrine full of consolation to all the Lord's people.—

Paul says; For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man after his own order; Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming.* In consequence of the transgression of Adam, death was inflicted upon the human family, and has continued ever since: in this respect, and no other, all die in Adam; but by the power of Christ, all will be made alive. Again, it is not said that the resurrection of the righteous and wicked will take place at the same time, or that the latter will bask forth into immortal glory or happiness; "but every man," says the apostle, "in his own order; Christ the first fruits, afterward they that are His at His coming." Thus the saints, will have a resurrection at His appearing:—Christ said: "They that have done good, shall come forth unto a resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." It will be seen by an examination of the xx chap. of Revelation, that there will be an elapse of a thousand years, between the resurrection of the righteous, and the wicked.

The apostle thus describes this glorious work: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the com-

* 1 Co. xv, 22, 23.

ing of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”* The above is so plain, that any comment whatever is unnecessary.

Job after his property was confiscated, his family destroyed, and he left to languish in consequence of affliction, broke out in the following strain of sublime prophecy: “Oh that my words were now written! Oh that they were printed in a book! that they were graven with an iron pen and laid in the rock forever! for I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter-day upon the earth: And though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.”† Thus Job anticipated the happy day when his Redeemer shall stand upon the earth, and that his mortality shall put on immortality.

Isaiah speaks of the resurrection thus: “Thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust: for thy dews is as the dews of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.”‡

I certainly have never read anything more sublime upon

* 1 Th. iv, 13—18. † Job, xix, 23—27. ‡ Is xxvi, 19—21.

the resurrection, than Ezekiel's vision of the same, which is recorded in the xxxvii chap. of his prophecy. It however, is generally spiritualized by the divines of the age, and applied to the conversion of the heathens and sinners, and also, revivals among the backsliders ; but I prefer the Lord's explanation of it, notwithstanding it is in direct hostility to the popular notions of the age.—It reads thus : “ Then He said unto me, son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel : behold they say, our bones are dried, and our hope is lost ; we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophesy and say unto them, thus saith the Lord God, behold, O my people I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live ; and I shall place you in your own land : then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord.” Thus we learn, that all Israel are to be brought up out of their graves, and not be transported as the poet says, beyond the bounds of time and space, or to some fairy region ; but into the land of Canaan or Israel, where they shall reign as kings and priests with Christ, when He subjects the earth and its inhabitants to Himself and sets up His everlasting kingdom. Again, this vision of the prophet establishes the idea of the literal resurrection of the body, beyond successful contradiction. The apostle Paul says : “ For we know that the whole creation groaneth, and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.”* The redemption of the body, is the resurrection of it. The whole of the xv chap. of 1 Cor.,

* Ro. viii, 22, 23.

is also plain upon this subject.—The apostle, speaking of the faith of the ancients, says: “They were tortured not accepting deliverance: that they might obtain a better resurrection.”* Indeed, it was the confidence that the ancients had in the promise of a glorious resurrection, that buoyed them up during their trials and affliction; for they regarded it, and the attendant blessings, as an ample reward for all their toils, and labour in the cause of God.

John most beautifully describes this important work in the following: “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it know Him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.”† Paul corroborates this by saying: “For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also, we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.”‡ Christ is the first-fruits of the resurrection; or in other words, He is the great prototype of the saints, who are consoled with the promise, that they shall be called out of their graves, and be like Him, or have their bodies fashioned like His.

I infer from the foregoing passages of scriptures, and many others that I have not referred to, that when Christ comes, all who have died in the faith, and those who remain in a state of mortality, will be caught up into the air to meet Him, and all the angels and redeemed saints that will accompany Him; at which time, He will cleanse the earth by fire from all wickedness and pollutions, remove the curse from it, and restore it to its primeval bloom and purity. As

* He xi, 15.

† 1 Jno iii, 1, 2.

‡ Ph. iii, 20, 21.

soon as this is done, He and all His saints will come to the earth. Then the great feast of the Lord, or marriage supper of the Lamb, will take place.

Isaiah in the following sublime language, alludes to this feast: "And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And He will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of His people shall be taken away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation."* Christ no doubt alluded to this feast, when He said to His disciples: "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." This feast, which John calls the marriage supper of the Lamb, will take place at the time the saints and angels in heaven, and saints on the earth; or in other words, when all the redeemed of the Lord from Adam to the latest birth shall be brought together, and shall strike hands for joy. At this time, Christ will remove the veil that now intervenes between us and God; then we shall behold His glory, and see Him as He is. He will also remove the curse from the earth, and take away the power of death, and affliction. And what is still more striking in the above account, all those who will share in this feast, will rejoice at the appearance of their Lord, and say, we have waited for Him and expected Him.—Thus the Millennium will be commenced.

We will now turn to the xx chapter of Revelation,

which is definite upon this subject.—John first describes an angel which he saw, that is to bind satan for a thousand years, after which time he says, he shall be loosed for a little season. He then says: “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshiped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, nor in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. And when the thousand years are expired, satan shall be loosed out of his prison.” The above is an excellent description of both the resurrection, and the Millennium; and we also learn from it, that the immortal saints, will reign with Christ as kings and priests. The following together with the above, establishes the idea beyond doubt, that the redeemed saints, instead of being transported to some unknown region, will actually dwell, and reign on the earth: “And they sung a new song, saying, thou art worthy to take the book and open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.”*

David in his xxxvii psalm, speaking of this glorious day, says that the wicked shall be cut off, and then the meek or righteous, shall inherit the earth, and delight themselves in the abundance of peace and truth. Christ said: “Bless-

* Re. v, 9, 10.

ed are the meek ; for they shall inherit the earth." At this time : "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid ; and the cow and the bear shall feed ; their young ones shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox." "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain ; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." The Spirit of God will be poured out upon all flesh, which will cause the Lord's people to prophecy, see visions, and to have great faith ; it will also cause the beasts of the forest to become perfectly docile and harmless. Isaiah in the lxxv ch. of his prophecy, says : " For, behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth ; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come to mind." David speaking of this work, says the Lord shall change the earth. The idea is, the Lord will remove the curse from the earth, cleanse it by fire, renew and make it a fit place for the redeemed saints to dwell. Isaiah proceeds thus : " But be ye glad and rejoice forever in that which I create : for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people : and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, (I understand this to mean, that the age of all people shall be numbered by years and not by days ; or in other words, none shall die in their infancy :) nor an old man that hath not filled his days : for the child shall die, (or be changed from mortality to immortality,) an hundred years old ; but the sinner, being an hundred years old, shall be accursed. And they shall build houses, and inhabit them ; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit ; they shall not plant, and another eat ; for as the days of a tree, are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble : for they

are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. / And it shall come to pass that before they call. I will answer; and while they are speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock; and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord." Again, Isaiah speaking of the inhabitants of Jerusalem at this happy day, says: "And all of thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children. In righteousness shalt thou be established, thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear; and from terror; for it shall not come near thee."*

Respected reader, I must now take my leave, and I trust that our interview has been an agreeable one, especially on your part, and that I have been at last successful in engaging your serious attention to the study of the scriptures, particularly those parts that relate to the majestic work that the Lord has promised to perform in the latter-days. Furthermore, allow me to say unto you, that I have the most implicit confidence, in the doctrine and sentiments that I have set forth in the preceding part of this work:—so farewell, and the Lord be with you until we meet in person, which perhaps will not take place until we stand before the judgment seat of Christ, where we shall probably have the opportunity of hearing each other upon all these important, and interesting topics.

* Is. liv, 13, 14.

THE END.



